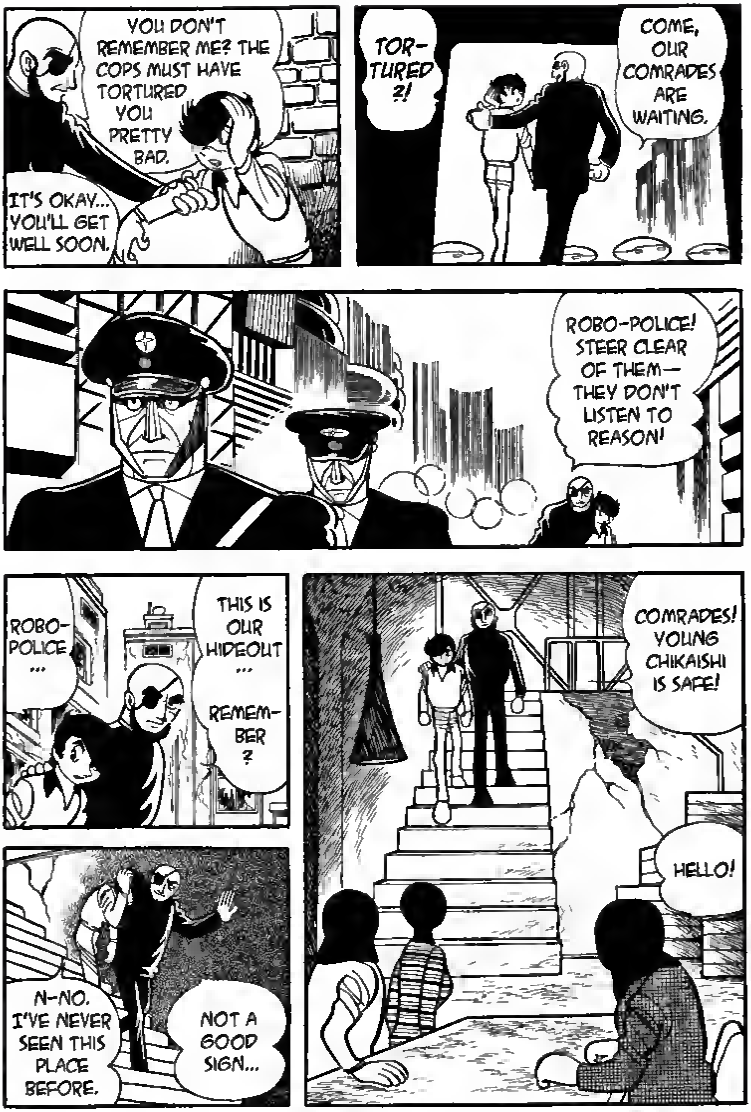
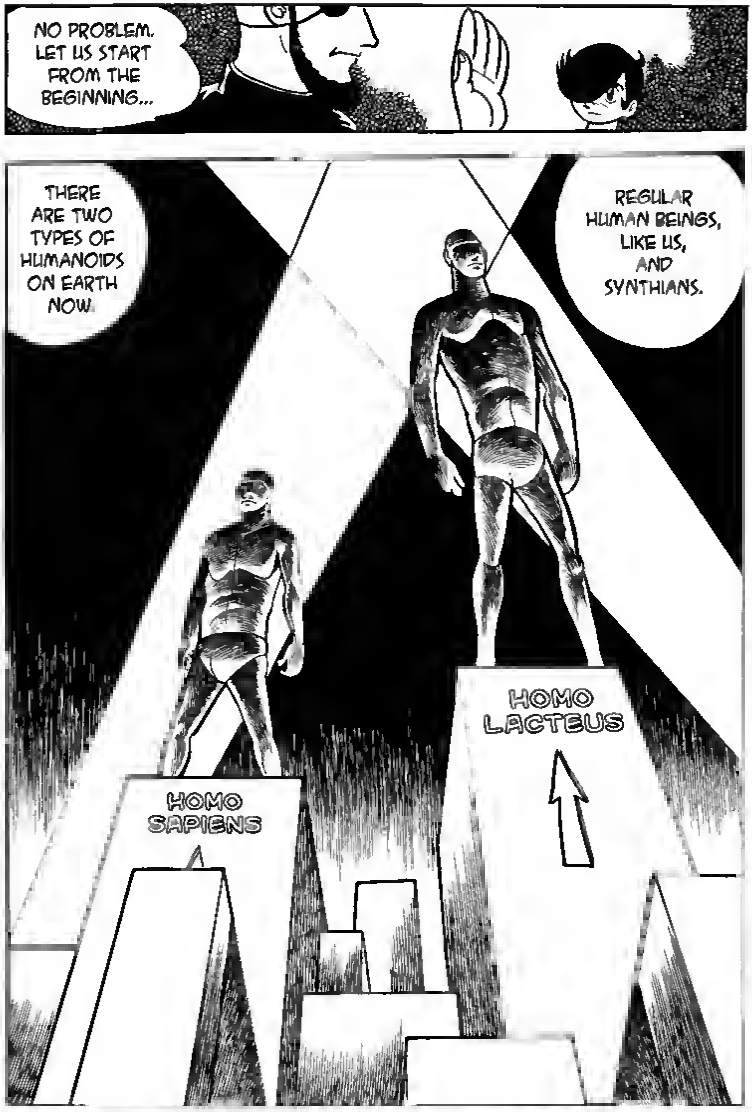
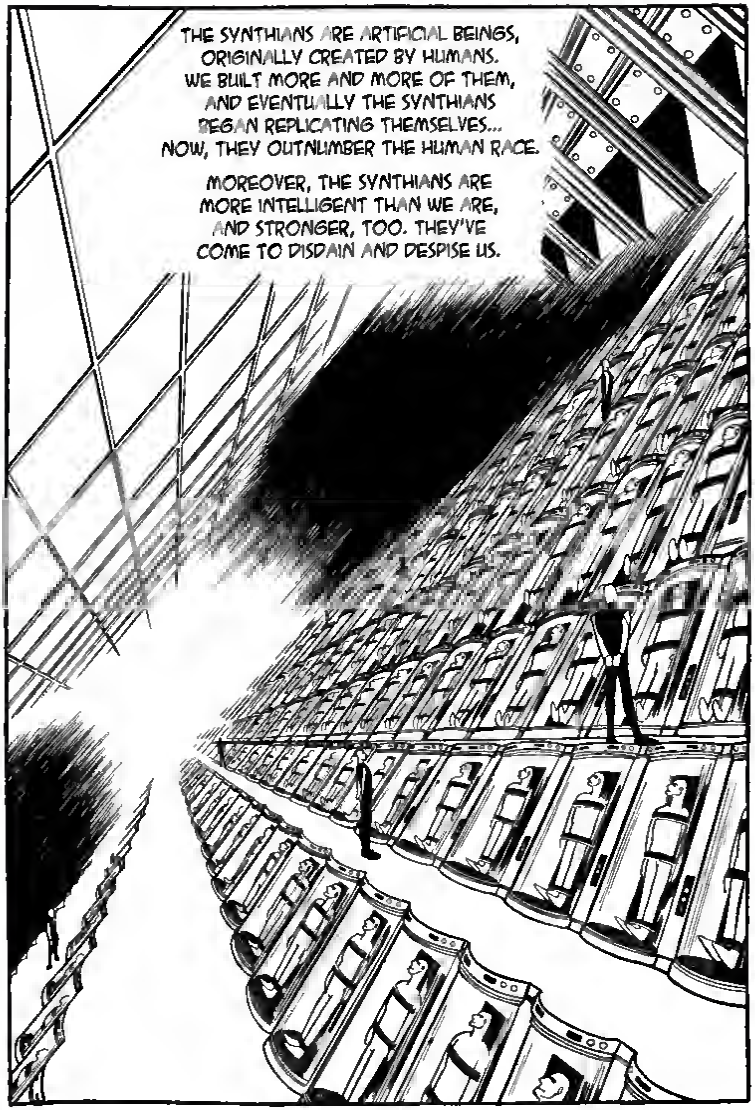
CHAPTER 4: QUEEN SIGMA
MY HEAD'S SPLITTING!
WHERE ON EARTH AM I? WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS?
MY NAME IS... SHO... SHOGO CHIKAISHI! THAT'S ALL I REMEMBER... UHH!
HEY, CHIKAISHI!
THIS WAY.
WHO ARE YOU? YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT A COP, I'D SAY.


YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME? THE COPS MUST HAVE TORTURED YOU PRETTY BAD.
IT'S OKAY... YOU'LL GET WELL SOON.
TOR-TURED ?!
COME, OUR COMRADES ARE WAITING.
ROBO-POLICE! STEER CLEAR OF THEM— THEY DON'T LISTEN TO REASON!
ROBO-POLICE ...
THIS IS OUR HIDEOUT ... REMEM-BER ?
N-NO. I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS PLACE BEFORE.
NOT A GOOD SIGN...
COMRADES! YOUNG CHIKAISHI IS SAFE!
HELLO!

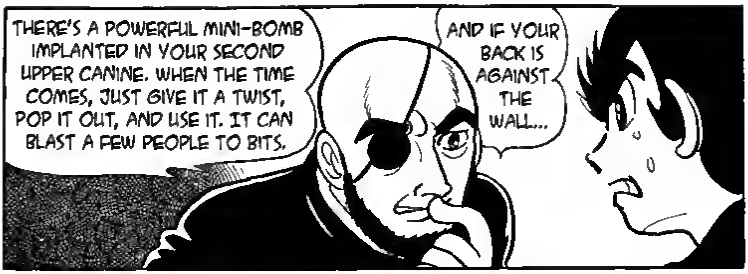
WELL? DO YOU REMEMBER US?
NO! NOT AT ALL!
YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG GUY!
I WAS JUST FREED FROM THE SLAMMER! I'M JUST SOME HOMELESS BUM!
DO YOU REMEMBER THIS FACE?
WELL ?
I REMEMBER IT FAINTLY... I'VE SEEN IT SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
HA! I KNEW IT! EVEN AFTER BEING TORTURED, HE REMEMBERS HIS MISSION!
WILL SOMEBODY TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?!

YOU'RE AN ASSASSIN.
WHAT?
YOUR JOB WAS TO GET NEAR THE QUEEN TO KILL HER!
YOU WERE GOING TO BECOME ONE OF HER PERSONAL SLAVES TO GET NEAR HER, THEN TAKE HER OUT WITH A BANG!
FOR THE SAKE OF THE HUMAN RACE!
THE QUEEN? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

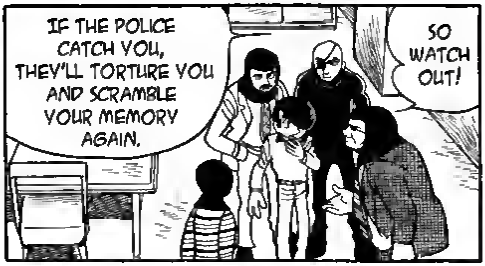

NO PROBLEM. LET US START FROM THE BEGINNING...
THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF HUMANOIDS ON EARTH NOW.
REGULAR HUMAN BEINGS, LIKE US, AND SYNTHIANS.
HOMO SAPIENS
HOMO LACTEUS


THE SYNTHIANS ARE ARTIFICIAL BEINGS, ORIGINALLY CREATED BY HUMANS. WE BUILT MORE AND MORE OF THEM, AND EVENTUALLY THE SYNTHIANS BEGAN REPLICATING THEMSELVES... NOW, THEY OUTNUMBER THE HUMAN RACE.
MOREOVER, THE SYNTHIANS ARE MORE INTELLIGENT THAN WE ARE, AND STRONGER, TOO. THEY'VE COME TO DISDAIN AND DESPISE US.

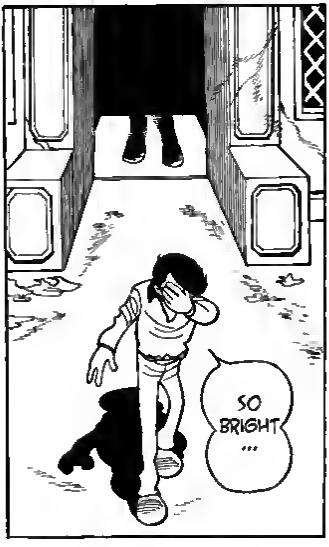
THEY'VE DRIVEN US UNDERGROUND AND NOW RULE MOST OF THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH...
INCLUDING JAPAN !!
JAPAN IS RULED BY THE SYNTHIAN QUEEN AND HER INNER CIRCLE.
2030!
WHAT YEAR IS IT, ANYWAY?
JAPAN IS...?
YOUR MISSION IS TO KILL THE QUEEN!
I GET IT! I GET IT!
I'M AN ASSASSIN, RIGHT? FINE! BUT HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KILL HER? I'M UNARMED!
YOUR WEAPON IS HIDDEN HERE.
IN YOUR TOOTH ...

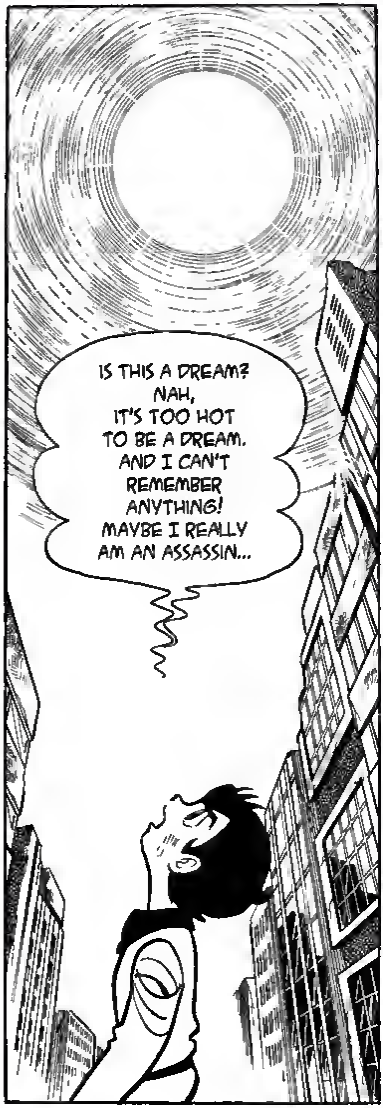

THERE'S A POWERFUL MINI-BOMB IMPLANTED IN YOUR SECOND UPPER CANINE. WHEN THE TIME COMES, JUST GIVE IT A TWIST, POP IT OUT, AND USE IT. IT CAN BLAST A FEW PEOPLE TO BITS.
AND IF YOUR BACK IS AGAINST THE WALL...

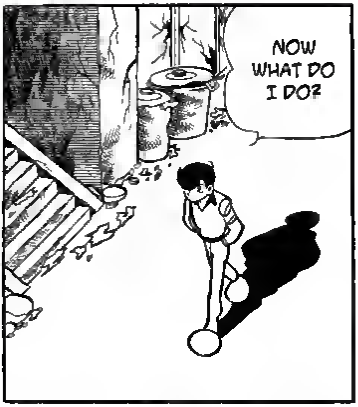
YOU MUST KILL YOURSELF WITH IT.

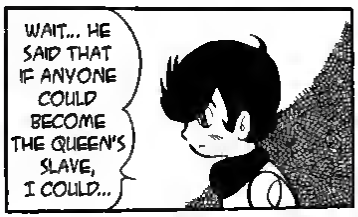

IF THE POLICE CATCH YOU, THEY'LL TORTURE YOU AND SCRAMBLE YOUR MEMORY AGAIN.
SO WATCH OUT!

IF ANYONE CAN BECOME THE QUEEN'S SLAVE, YOU CAN! WE PRAY FOR YOUR SUCCESS!
DO IT FOR MANKIND!


SO BRIGHT ...

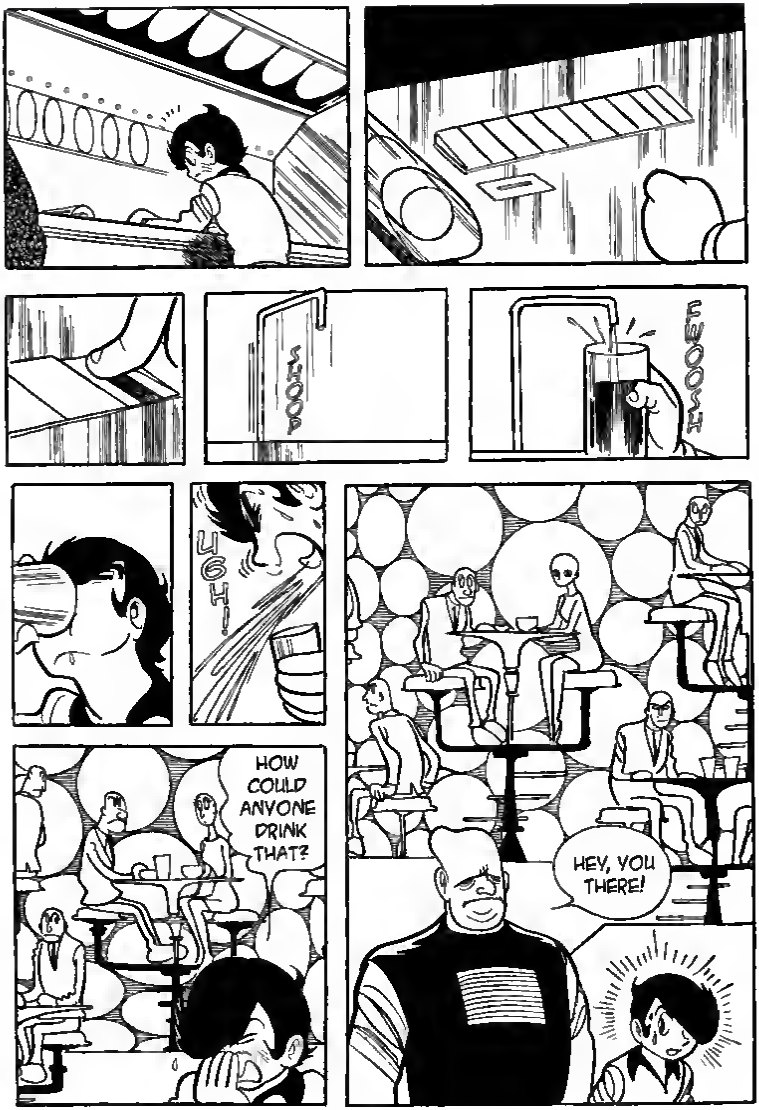

IS THIS A DREAM? NAH, IT'S TOO HOT TO BE A DREAM. AND I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING! MAYBE I REALLY AM AN ASSASSIN...


NOW WHAT DO I DO?

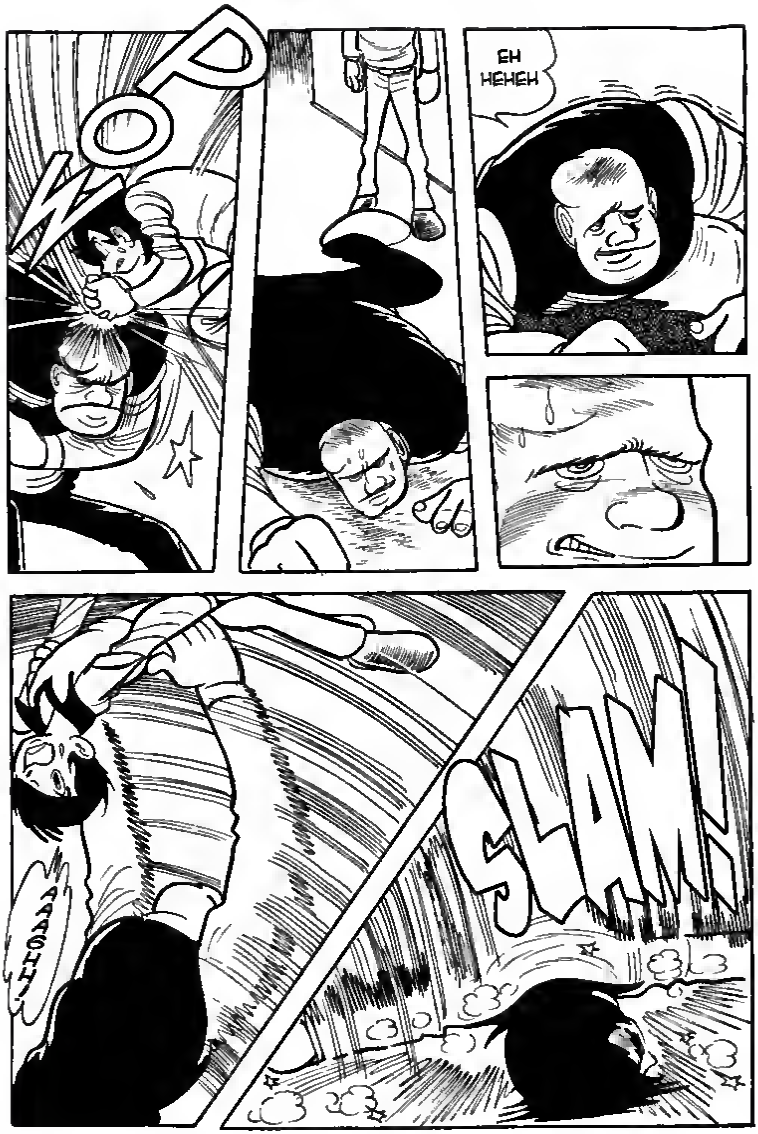

WAIT... HE SAID THAT IF ANYONE COULD BECOME THE QUEEN'S SLAVE, I COULD...

BUT WHY ME?

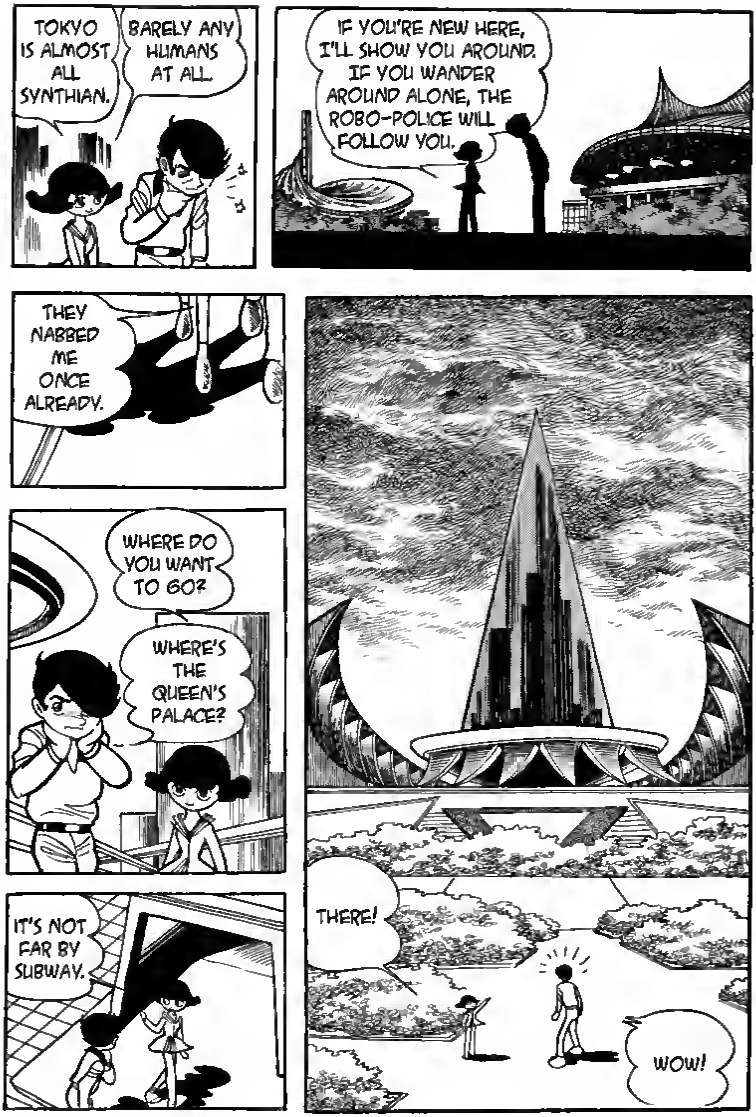
I'M THIRSTY ...
COFFEE


SLOOP
FWOOSH
UGH!
HOW COULD ANYONE DRINK THAT?
HEY, YOU THERE!

HUMANS LIKE YOU AREN'T WELCOME HERE.
THIS IS A SYNTHIAN COFFEE SHOP!
YOU FLESH-AND-BLOOD PEOPLE STINK! TALK ABOUT B.O.!
NOW GET LOST!
HA! NO WAY!
WANT ME TO CALL THE ROBO-POLICE?
WHUD
SPLASH

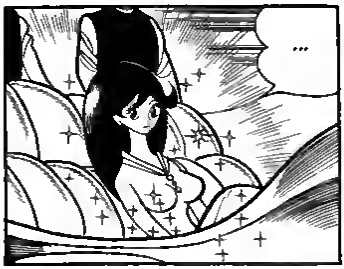

WOP
EH HEHEH
SLAM!
AAAGH!

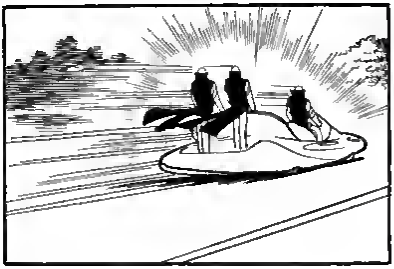
WHAM
A HUMAN 2
LOOKS LIKE IT.
EW!
THUD
STOP STARING AT ME! I'M NOT A ZOO ANIMAL!
I DON'T MIND HUMANS.
HELLO THERE!
MY NAME IS MINA.
ARE YOU NEW TO TOKYO?
...


TOKYO IS ALMOST ALL SYNTHIAN.
BARELY ANY HUMANS AT ALL.
IF YOU'RE NEW HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND. IF YOU WANDER AROUND ALONE, THE ROBO-POLICE WILL FOLLOW YOU.
THEY NABBED ME ONCE ALREADY.
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?
WHERE'S THE QUEEN'S PALACE?
IT'S NOT FAR BY SUBWAY.
THERE!
WOW!

LOOK! THERE SHE IS!
WE'RE LUCKY. SHE ALMOST NEVER COMES OUT.
SHE'S HEADED THIS WAY!
SO SHE IS THE QUEEN.
THE WOMAN I'M SUPPOSED TO KILL!

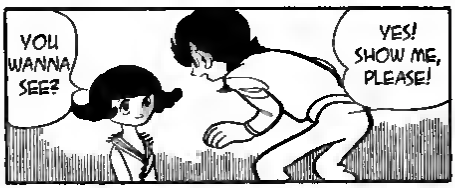
SHE REMINDS ME OF SOMEONE ...
I CAN'T REMEMBER WHO... BUT I KNOW I'VE SEEN THAT FACE BEFORE!


...

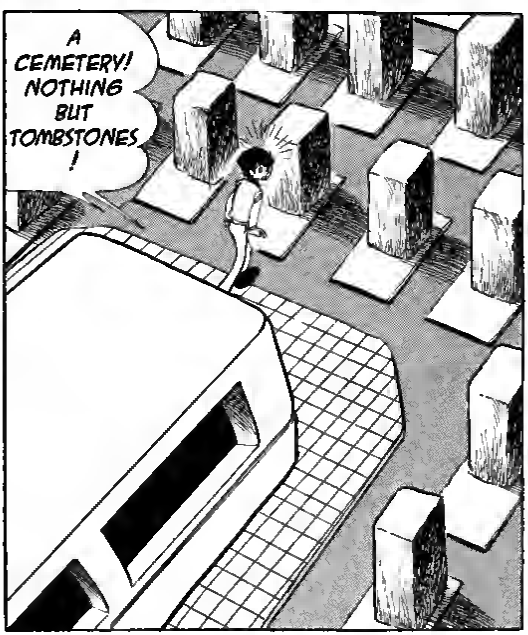


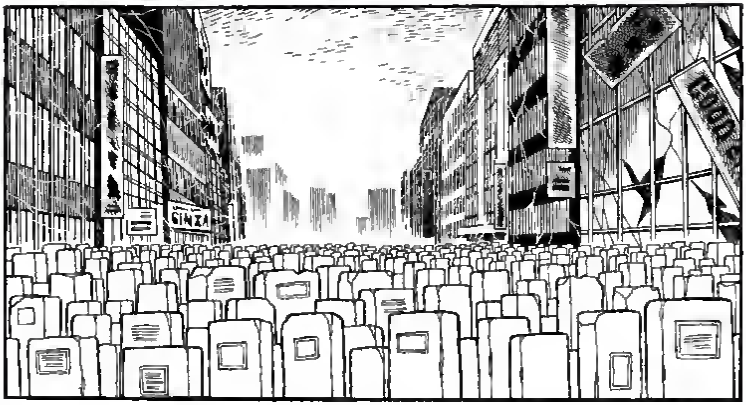
HMM, THE QUEEN'S PALACE ...
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE WE'RE IN TOKYO!
WHAT'S BECOME OF GINZA AND KORAKUEN STADIUM?

THOSE PLACES ARE BORING.


YOU WANNA SEE?
YES! SHOW ME, PLEASE!

THIS IS GINZA? IT'S AWFULLY QUIET, ISN'T IT?
NOBODY EVER COMES HERE!

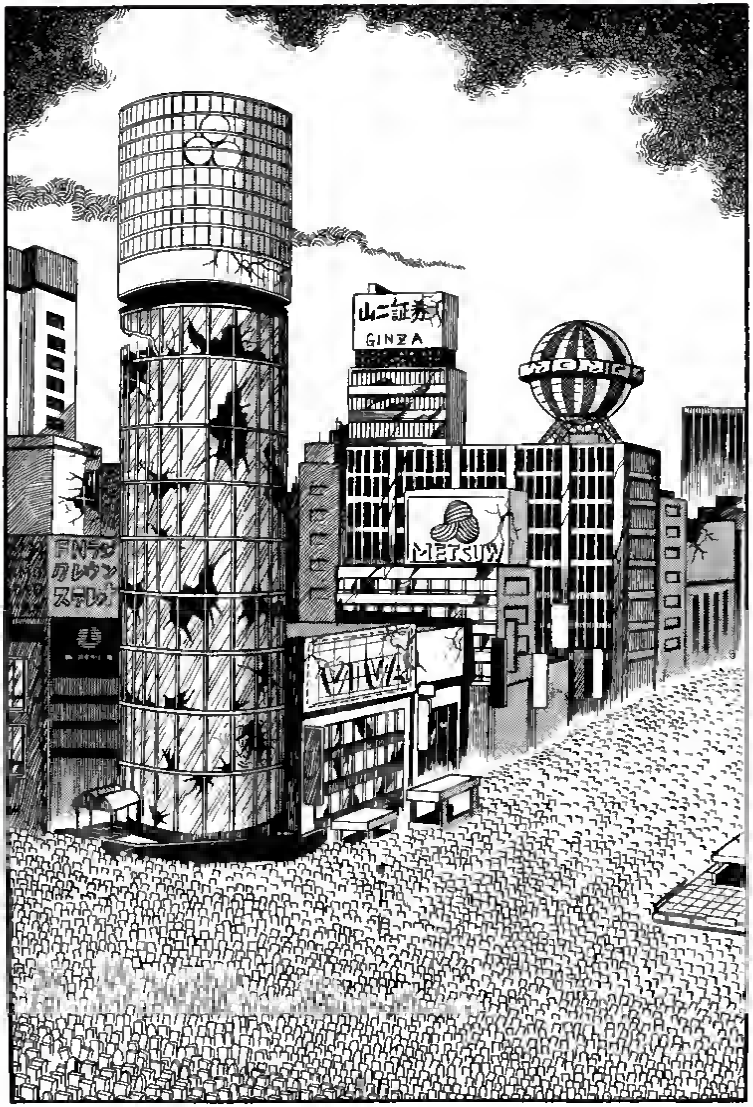

A CEMETERY! NOTHING BUT TOMBSTONES!


GINZA

I FEEL LIKE I'M LOSING MY MIND! ARE THESE ALL HUMAN GRAVES?
IS ALL OF GINZA LIKE THIS?
YES! IT'S ALL TOMBSTONES FROM SHINJUKU TO KANDA!

AND NOBODY LIVES IN THESE BUILDINGS? NOT A SOUL?

THEY'VE BEEN ABANDONED FOR YEARS. THIS WHOLE AREA IS A RUIN.
BUT WHY? HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!


山二証券
GINZA
MITSUI
VIVA

HOW DID ALL THESE PEOPLE DIE?
WAS IT A WAR? RADIATION POISONING?

PHOTO-CHEMICAL POLLUTION!

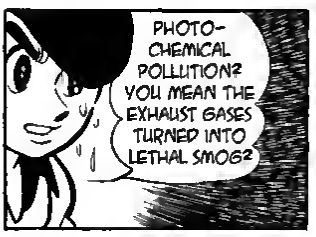
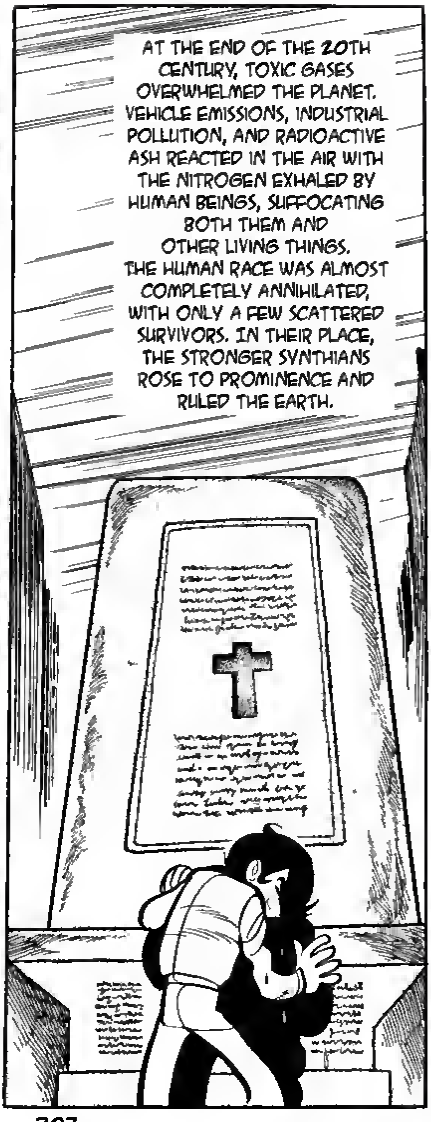
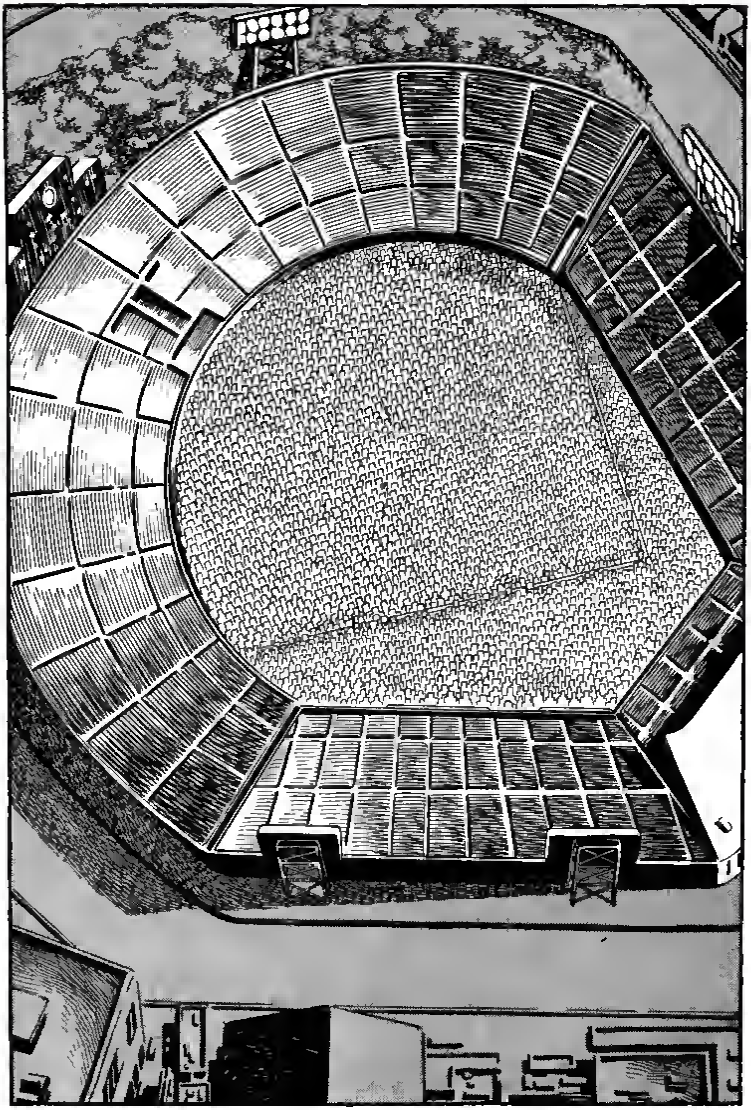


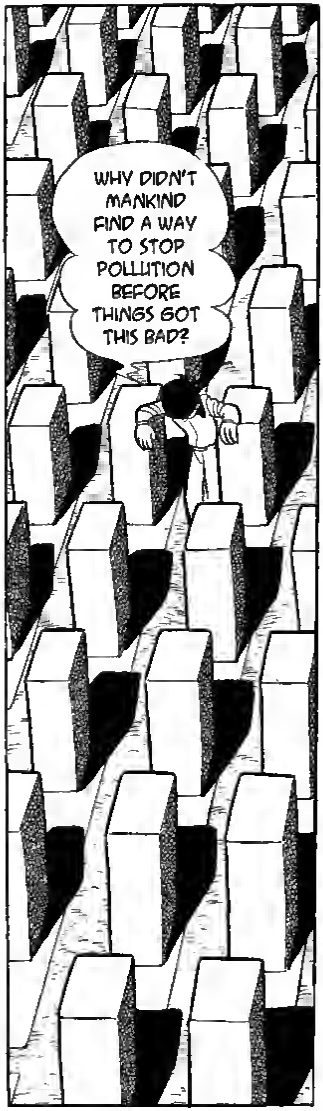
PHOTO-CHEMICAL POLLUTION? YOU MEAN THE EXHAUST GASES TURNED INTO LETHAL SMOG?

THEY SAY HUMANS WERE DYING LIKE FLIES FOR THREE YEARS. SEE? IT'S ALL WRITTEN RIGHT HERE...


AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY, TOXIC GASES OVERWHELMED THE PLANET. VEHICLE EMISSIONS, INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION, AND RADIOACTIVE ASH REACTED IN THE AIR WITH THE NITROGEN EXHALED BY HUMAN BEINGS, SUFFOCATING BOTH THEM AND OTHER LIVING THINGS. THE HUMAN RACE WAS ALMOST COMPLETELY ANNIHILATED, WITH ONLY A FEW SCATTERED SURVIVORS. IN THEIR PLACE, THE STRONGER SYNTHIANS ROSE TO PROMINENCE AND RULED THE EARTH.



IN THE SHADOW OF RUINED SKYSCRAPERS, MILLIONS OF GRAVES CRY OUT... "TOO LATE... IT'S ALL TOO LATE!"


WHY DIDN'T MANKIND FIND A WAY TO STOP POLLUTION BEFORE THINGS GOT THIS BAD?

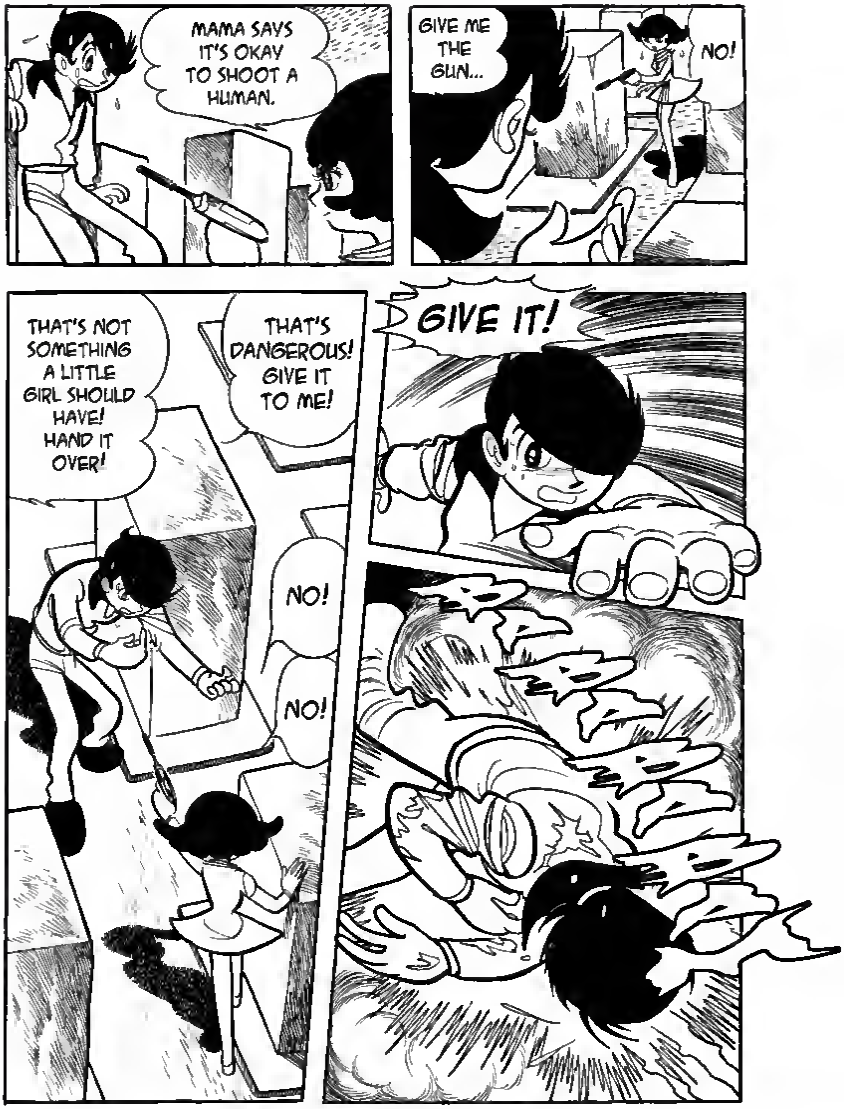
SYNTHIANS WOULD NEVER BE SO STUPID.
HUMANS ARE STUPID!

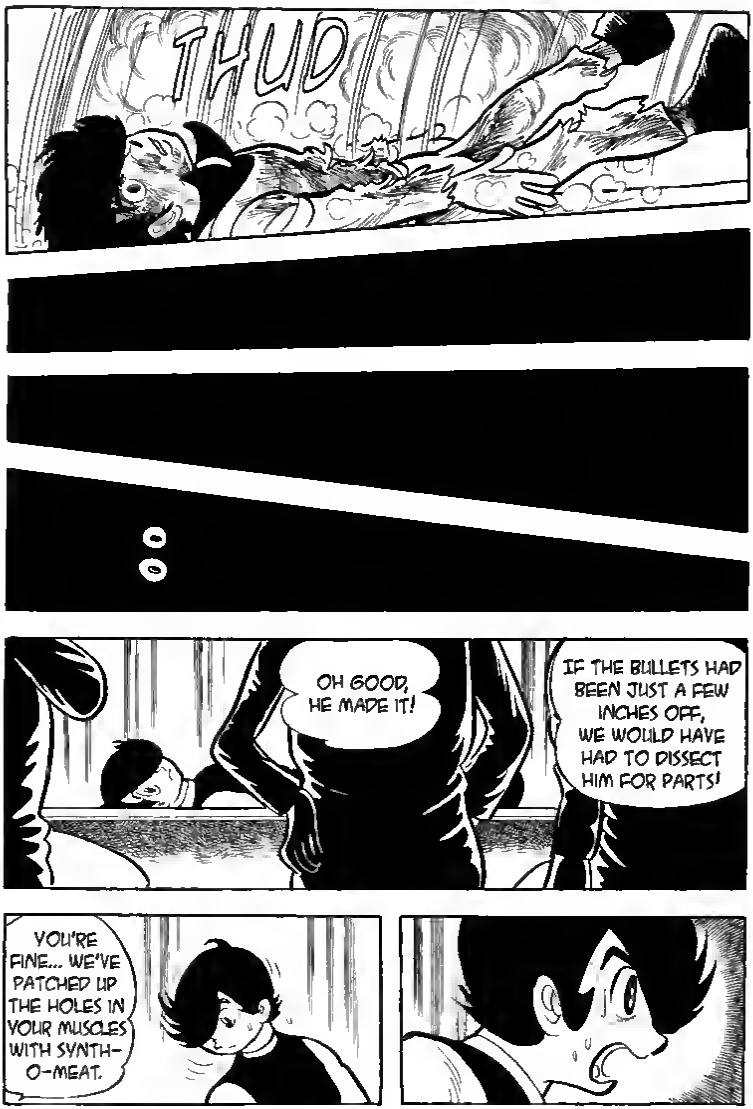
SYNTHIAN SCUM...

YOU STOLE OUR CIVILIZATION!

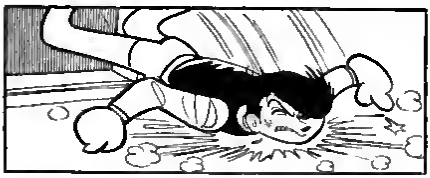
I'M SORRY...
I WAS WRONG TO RAISE MY FIST AT YOU WHEN YOU WERE KIND ENOUGH TO SHOW ME AROUND.

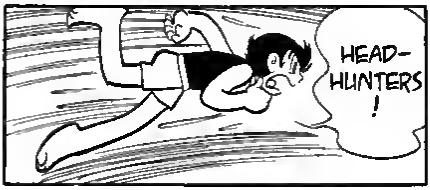
THAT'S OKAY. HUMAN BEINGS ARE PRONE TO VIOLENCE, SO I TAKE PRECAUTIONS WHEN THEY'RE AROUND.
SEE?


MAMA SAYS IT'S OKAY TO SHOOT A HUMAN.
GIVE ME THE GUN...
NO!
THAT'S NOT SOMETHING A LITTLE GIRL SHOULD HAVE! HAND IT OVER!
THAT'S DANGEROUS! GIVE IT TO ME!
NO!
NO!
GIVE IT!


THUD
OH GOOD, HE MADE IT!
IF THE BULLETS HAD BEEN JUST A FEW INCHES OFF, WE WOULD HAVE HAD TO DISSECT HIM FOR PARTS!
YOU'RE FINE... WE'VE PATCHED UP THE HOLES IN YOUR MUSCLES WITH SYNTH-O-MEAT.

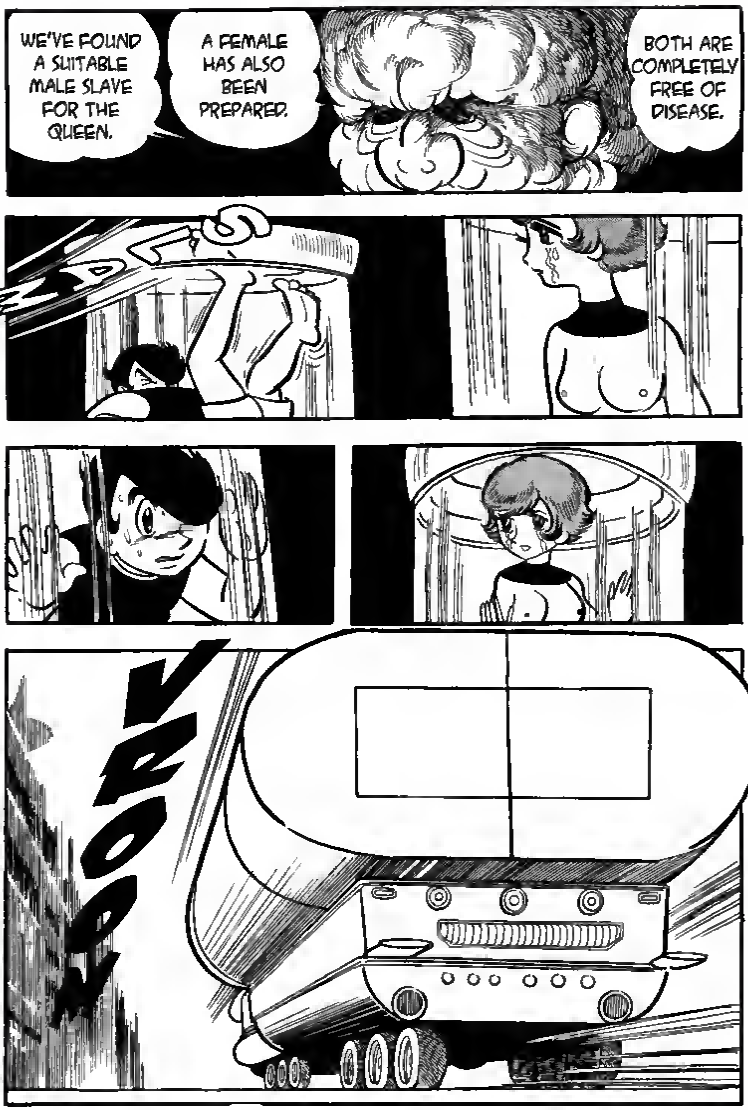
UGH! SEVERED HEADS!
AAAH!

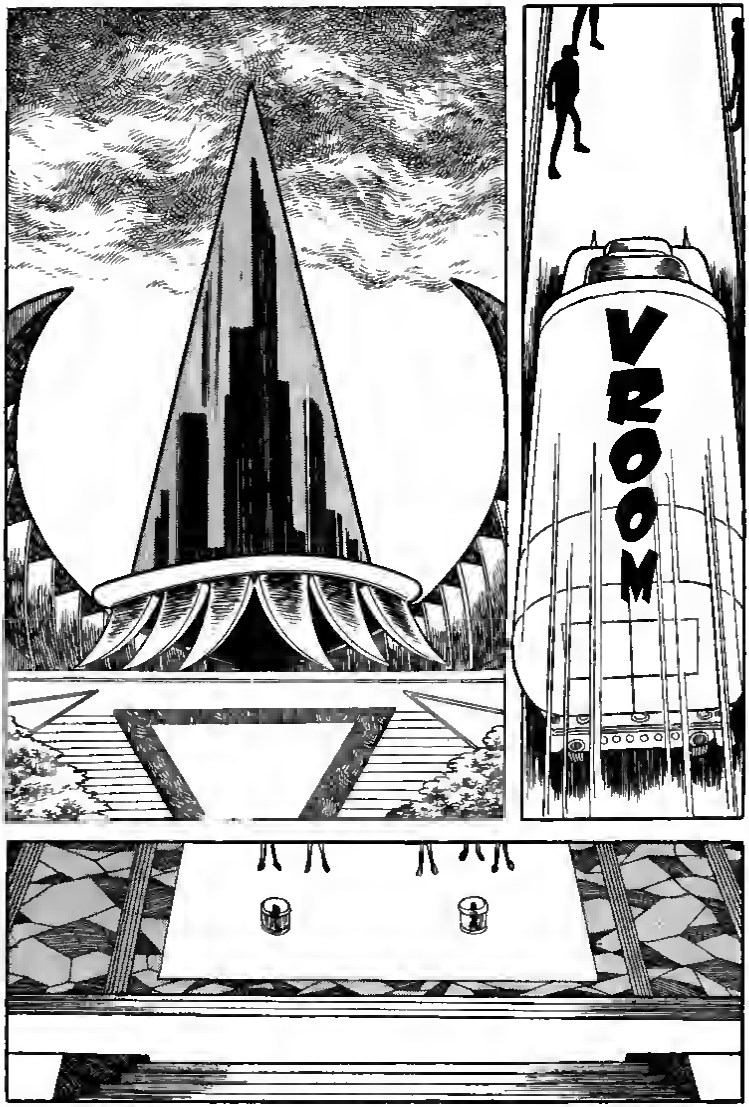


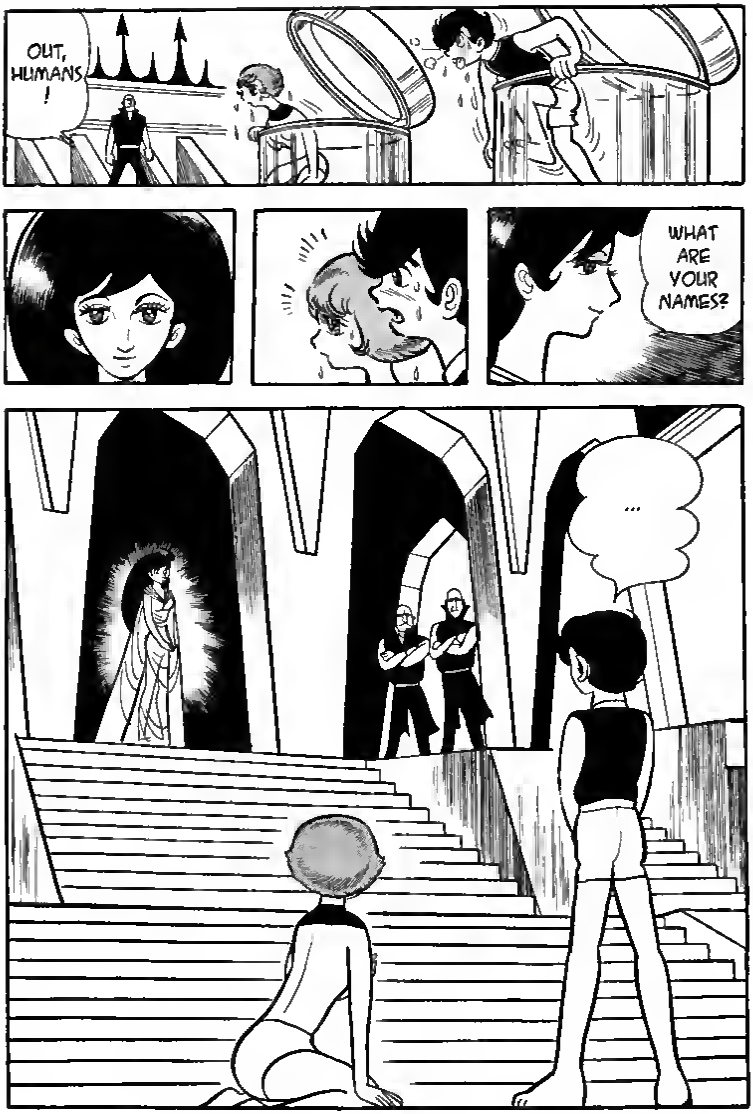

HEAD-HUNTERS!

HUH?
?
?
?

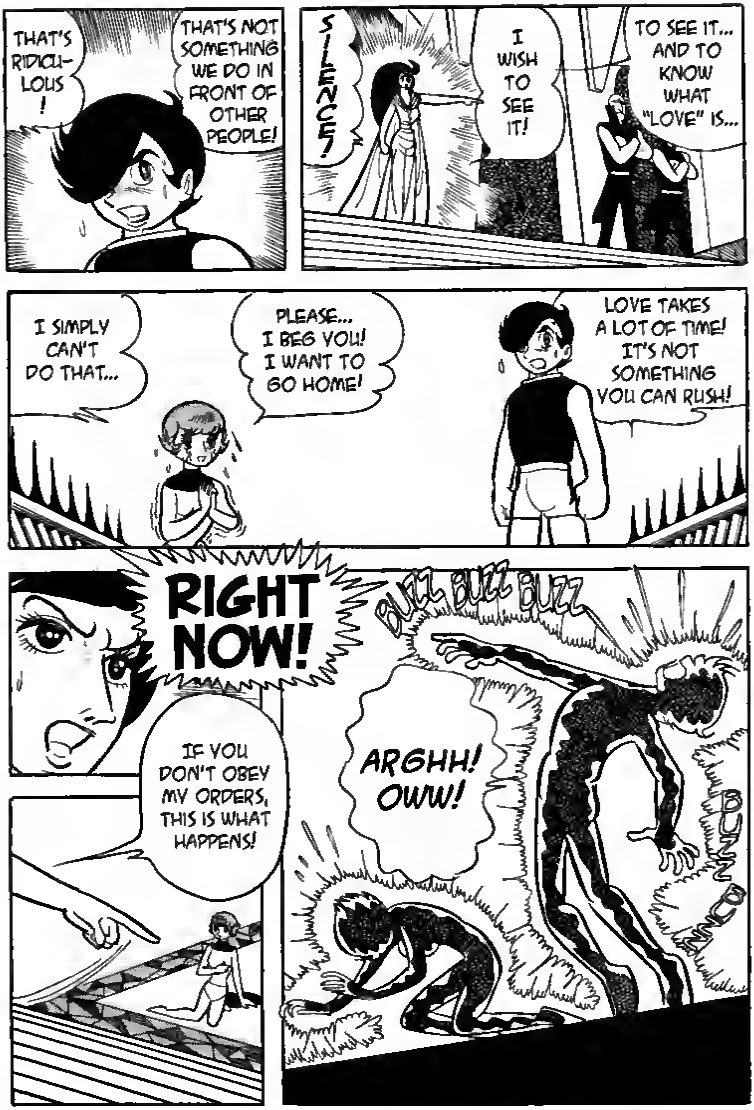
THE FLOOR!
OOF!
WAHAHAHA
OOF OOF OOF OOF
WHAT THE? LOOKING ME UP, HUH?
IF YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME, GO AHEAD AND DO IT!
HAHAHA
WAHAHAHA
NO, WE'RE NOT GOING TO KILL YOU.
QUITE THE CONTRARY... WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE TASTE OF HEAVEN.
IF YOU BEHAVE YOURSELF, THAT IS...
FROM THE ROYAL ACADEMY TO HER MAJESTY'S PRIVATE SECRETARY:


WE'VE FOUND A SUITABLE MALE SLAVE FOR THE QUEEN.
A FEMALE HAS ALSO BEEN PREPARED.
BOTH ARE COMPLETELY FREE OF DISEASE.
VROOM

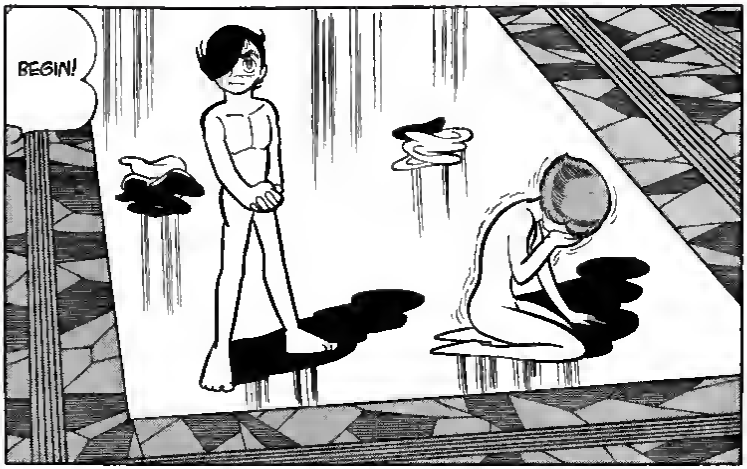

VROOM


OUT, HUMANS!
WHAT ARE YOUR NAMES?
...

TELL ME YOUR NAMES.
MY NAME IS YASUKO.
I'M... SHOGO.
YOU WERE PICKED BY THE ROYAL ACADEMY.
YOU KNOW WHY YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE, DON'T YOU? WE SYNTHIANS ARE PROPAGATED IN TEST TUBES THROUGH CLONING. NOT LIKE YOU HUMANS, WHO REPRODUCE THROUGH A UNION OF THE SEXES.
I'M SURE YOU KNOW ALL THIS, DON'T YOU?
...
FOR THIS REASON, I KNOW NOTHING OF THE LOVE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.
HOW DO MEN AND WOMEN ENGAGE IN LOVE? HOW DO YOU CONNECT TO ONE ANOTHER? HOW DO YOU PRODUCE OFFSPRING?
I'M VERY CURIOUS.
YOU ARE MY SLAVES.
YOU WILL SHOW THIS TO ME!


THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS!
THAT'S NOT SOMETHING WE DO IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLE!
SILENCE!
I WISH TO SEE IT!
TO SEE IT... AND TO KNOW WHAT "LOVE" IS...
I SIMPLY CAN'T DO THAT...
PLEASE... I BEG YOU! I WANT TO GO HOME!
LOVE TAKES A LOT OF TIME! IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN RUSH!
RIGHT NOW!
IF YOU DON'T OBEY MY ORDERS, THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS!
BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ
ARGHH! OUW!
BUZZ BUZZ

BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ
STOP!
HOLY...
NOW, REMOVE YOUR GARMENTS! ALL OF THEM!


BEGIN!

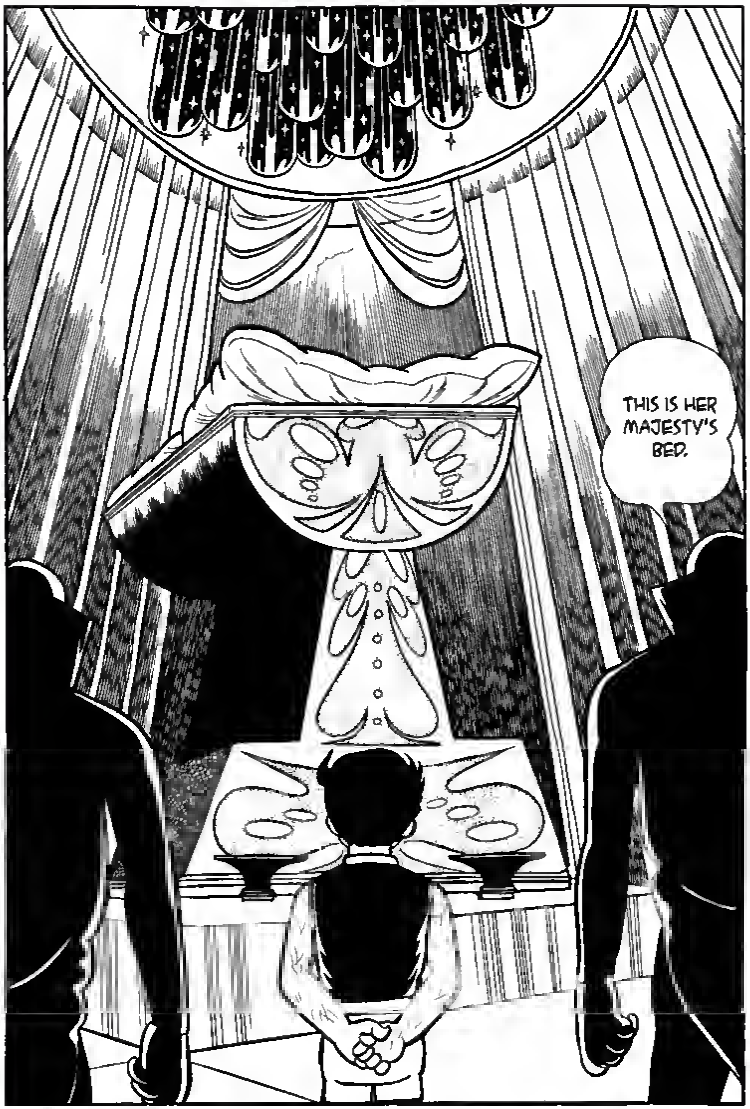
DON'T JUST LOUNGE THERE! DO YOU WANT TO BE PUNISHED AGAIN?

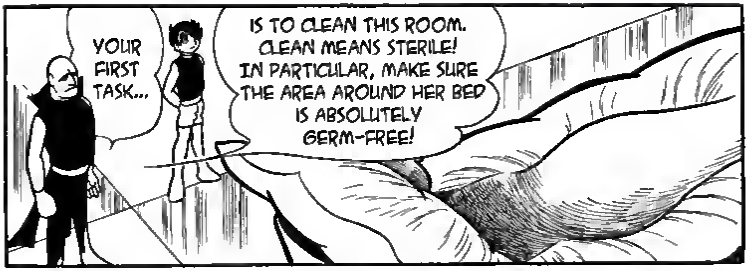
EVEN ROBOTS CAN MIMIC THAT KIND OF THING!
YOU'RE LIKE ROBOTS, JUST STANDING THERE...
I WISH TO SEE THE ACT OF LOVE!
SHOW ME HOW HUMANS PRODUCE BABIES!
HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO KEEP KISSING?
I'VE SEEN ENOUGH OF THAT ALREADY.
KEEP QUIET AND DO AS I SAY. WE'LL FOOL HER WITH KISSING...
I'LL BET THE SYNTHIANS HAVE NEVER KISSED LET ALONE MADE LOVE.

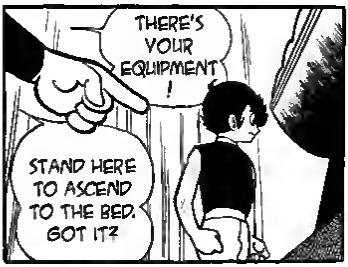
THAT'S CRAZY! FOR ONE THING, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT!
BESIDES, THE TWO OF US HAVE ONLY JUST MET!
I WISH TO SEE IT. DO AS I SAY!
NO!
YOU'RE SHAMELESS AND ABSURD!
I WON'T OBEY YOUR ORDER!
BUNN BUNN
BUNN BUNN
IF YOU CONTINUE TO DISOBEY, IT'LL GET EVEN WORSE.

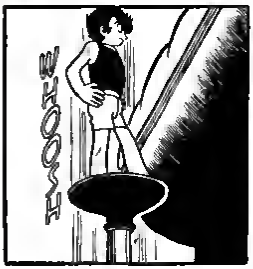
I WON'T DO IT!
BUZZZ
AARGH!
SHE'S DEAD!

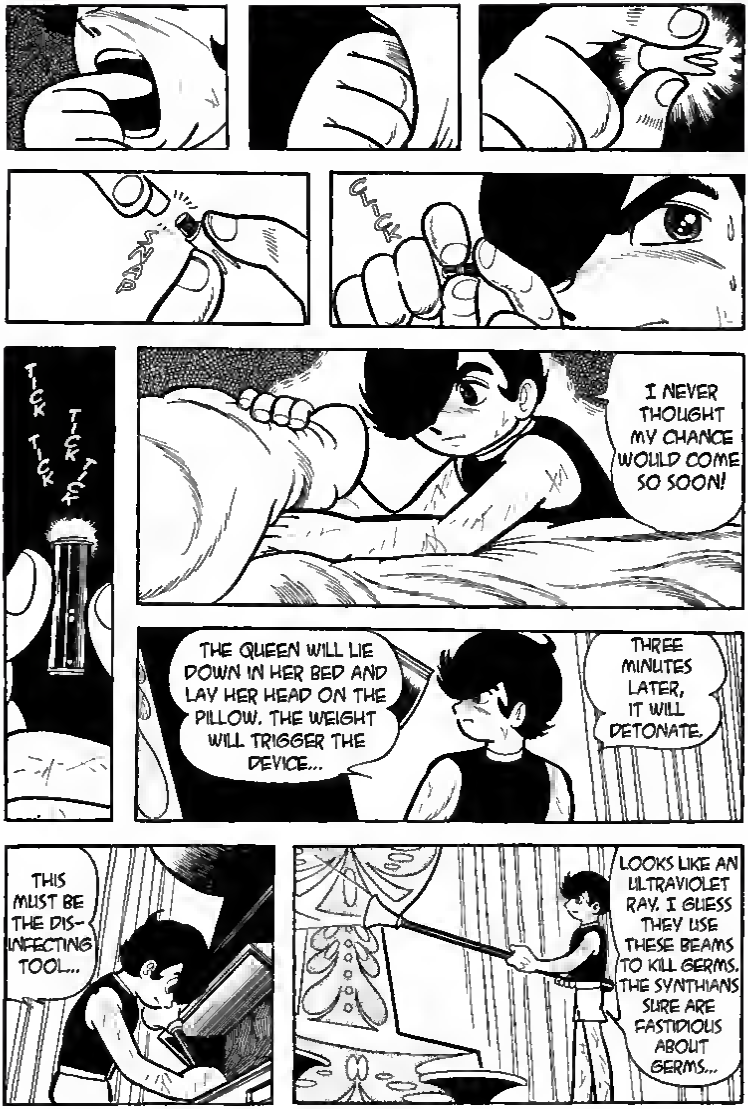
MURDERER!
WITCH!
YOU BLOODLESS, WORTHLESS FAKE OF A HUMAN!
...
TO MY BEDROOM!
BEDROOM?!
SURVIVING MALE SLAVE, YOU WILL PERFORM CHORES FOR ME UNTIL ANOTHER FEMALE IS BROUGHT.
YOU CAN'T HELP HER NOW. SHE'S DEAD.
YOU ARE HER MAJESTY'S SLAVE HER MAJESTY HAS A SPECIAL INTEREST IN HUMANS.
MARCH!


THIS IS HER MAJESTY'S BED.


YOUR FIRST TASK...
IS TO CLEAN THIS ROOM. CLEAN MEANS STERILE! IN PARTICULAR, MAKE SURE THE AREA AROUND HER BED IS ABSOLUTELY GERM-FREE!

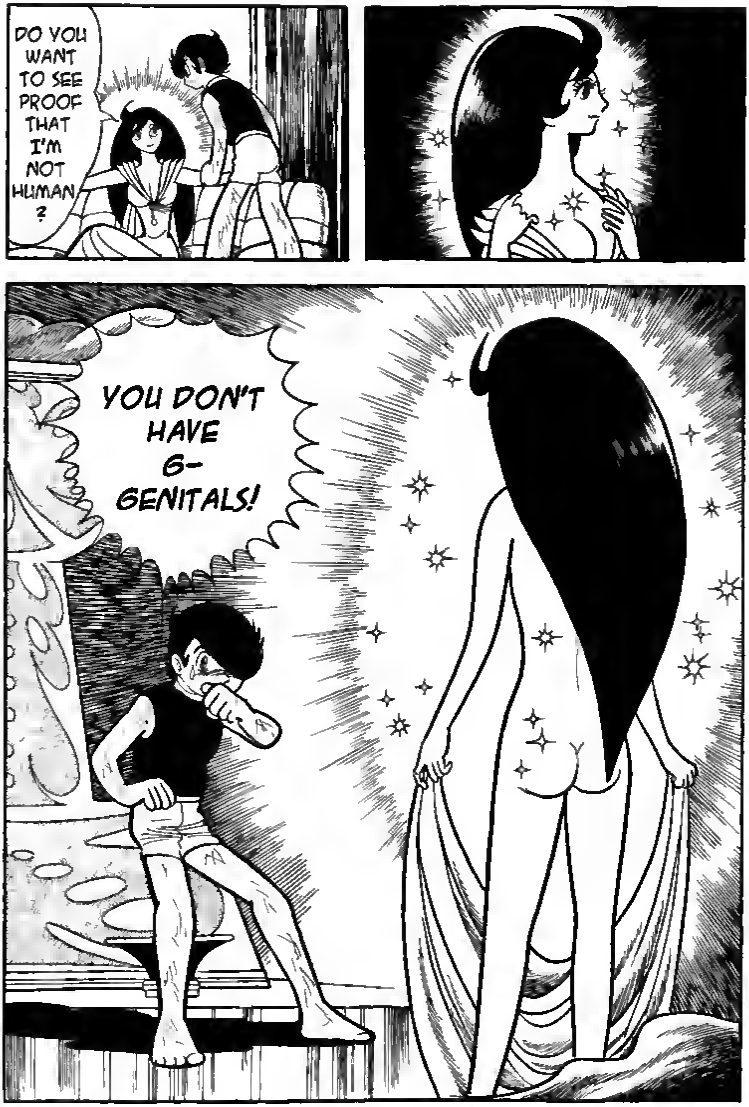

THERE'S YOUR EQUIPMENT!
STAND HERE TO ASCEND TO THE BED. GOT IT?

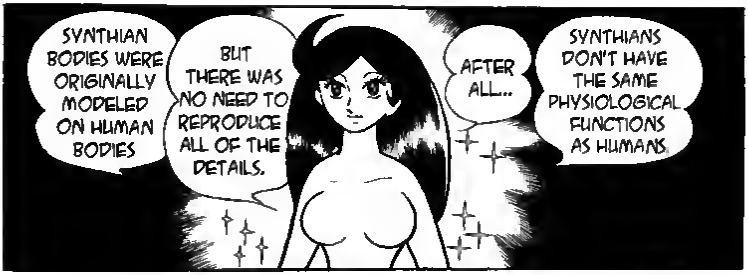

WHOOSH


I NEVER THOUGHT MY CHANCE WOULD COME SO SOON!
TICK TICK TICK TICK
THE QUEEN WILL LIE DOWN IN HER BED AND LAY HER HEAD ON THE PILLOW. THE WEIGHT WILL TRIGGER THE DEVICE...
THREE MINUTES LATER, IT WILL DETONATE.
THIS MUST BE THE DIS-INFECTING TOOL...
LOOKS LIKE AN ULTRAVIOLET RAY. I GUESS THEY USE THESE BEAMS TO KILL GERMS. THE SYNTHIANS SURE ARE FASTIDIOUS ABOUT GERMS...

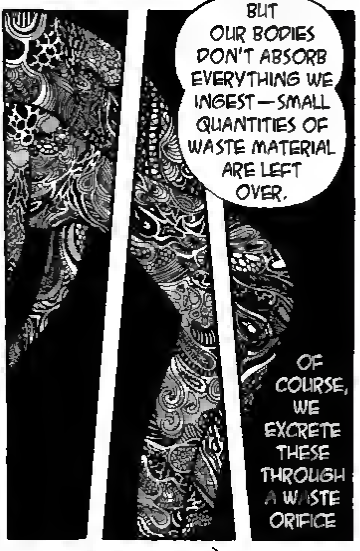
...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
YOU WANT TO KILL ME, DON'T YOU? YOU HATE ME FOR KILLING THAT HUMAN FEMALE RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES.
BUT YOU CAN'T ATTACK ME. NO MATTER HOW YOU DESPISE ME, YOU'RE UNABLE TO HARM A SYNTHIAN.
THAT'S BECAUSE HUMANS CAN NO LONGER SURVIVE WITHOUT SYNTHIANS. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE YOUR MASTERS! HA HA HA!

HUH?
I'VE GOT IT!
I REMEMBER NOW!
YOUR FACE!
YOU'RE NOT A SYNTHIAN!
YOU'RE A HUMAN BEING. I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE PRETENDING TO BE A SYNTHIAN, BUT YOU'RE REALLY A HUMAN WOMAN NAMED HIROMI WATARI!
WELL? I'M RIGHT, AREN'T I? THERE CAN'T BE TWO PEOPLE WITH THE SAME FACE!
ME? HUMAN?
ME A HUMAN ?!
HA!
HA!
HAHAHAHAHA


DO YOU WANT TO SEE PROOF THAT I'M NOT HUMAN?
YOU DON'T HAVE G-GENITALS!


SYNTHIAN BODIES WERE ORIGINALLY MODELED ON HUMAN BODIES
BUT THERE WAS NO NEED TO REPRODUCE ALL OF THE DETAILS.
AFTER ALL...
SYNTHIANS DON'T HAVE THE SAME PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS AS HUMANS.

SYNTHIANS DON'T EAT. WE DERIVE NUTRIENTS FROM SOLUTIONS THAT WE DRINK OR INJECT. TASTE AND SMELL DON'T MATTER TO US, AS LONG AS THE CALORIC CONTENT IS HIGH.


BUT OUR BODIES DON'T ABSORB EVERYTHING WE INGEST—SMALL QUANTITIES OF WASTE MATERIAL ARE LEFT OVER.
OF COURSE, WE EXCRETE THESE THROUGH A WASTE ORIFICE

AFTER BREAKING THEM DOWN INTO BASIC ELEMENTS.
WE DON'T HAVE FILTHY WASTE FACILITIES LIKE YOUR HUMAN TOILETS!

BECAUSE WE DON'T BEAR CHILDREN, WE OF COURSE DON'T NEED GENITALS.
THEN WHY DO YOU LOOK JUST LIKE A HUMAN WOMAN I KNOW?
WHAT A STUPID QUESTION!
THE SCIENCE ACADEMY HAS A BILLION DIFFERENT HUMAN FACES RECORDED IN ITS COMPUTER.
MY FACE WAS SELECTED FROM AMONGST THEM.
SEE? THESE MODEL FACES WERE ALL CREATED FROM THAT DATA.

SO THE SEVERED HEADS I SAW BACK THERE WERE SYNTHIAN HEADS?
AND THE DATA FOR HIROMI WATARI'S FACE IS IN THAT COMPUTER AS WELL?
NOW YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU FOOLISH HUMAN BOY?
HA HA HA HA! YOU LOOK TERRIBLY DISAPPOINTED!
THIS HUMAN YOU CALL HIROMI WATARI...
WAS SHE YOUR SWEET-HEART?
...
YOU WERE IN LOVE!
RIGHT?
I'VE NEVER LOVED A WOMAN.
I SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOUR LIES.

TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES!
ALL OF THEM!
STEP UP HERE!
...
GET INTO THE BED!
WHOOSH

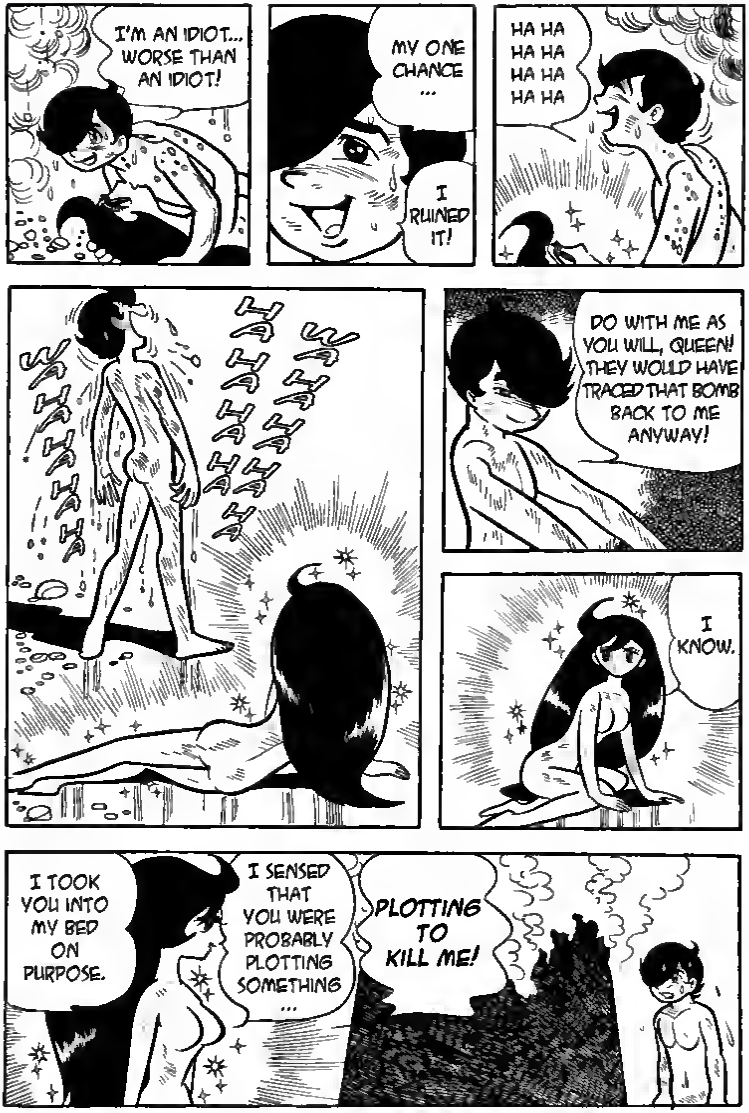
PRETEND I AM THIS WOMAN, HIROMI, AND SHOW ME THE ACT OF LOVE!
AS I TOLD YOU, WE SYNTHIANS KNOW HOW TO ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER, BUT WE KNOW NOTHING OF LOVE,
ESPECIALLY THE LOVE BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN!
I FIND THIS VEXING. I'LL DO ANYTHING TO BETTER UNDERSTAND LOVE.
THAT'S WHY I'M WILLING TO CONFIDE IN YOU LIKE THIS...
IN YOU, A MERE HUMAN!
LOVE ME!
NOW, THEN, SHOGO... I AM YOUR HIROMI.
SWOOSH

WHY DO YOU LOOK SO AFRAID?
TELL ME YOU LOVE ME!
THREE MINUTES TO DETONATION!
KISS ME...

LET GO OF ME. THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME.
A SYNTHIAN COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND HUMAN FEELINGS
NO! NO! NO! DON'T LET GO OF ME SHOGO!
A STRANGE FEELING IS COMING OVER ME!
IT'S GOING TO GO OFF...
IN LESS THAN A MINUTE!

TICK
TICK
TICK
TICK
TICK
10 SECONDS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
AAA
SHOGO !!
HAAH HAAH HAAH
'GASP'

KABOOM!
I'M...

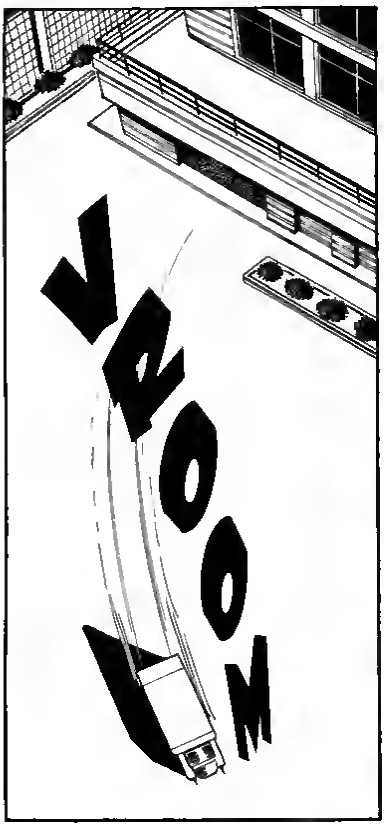

I'M AN IDIOT... WORSE THAN AN IDIOT!
MY ONE CHANCE ...
I RUINED IT!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
HAHAHAH

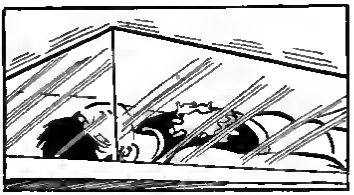
YOU'RE AN ASSASSIN FROM THE HUMAN UNDER-GROUND, AREN'T YOU?
YOU'RE A LOT SHARPER THAN I IMAGINED.
I EXPECT YOU'LL EXECUTE ME NOW. GO AHEAD— I'M READY TO DIE
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
AH!
YOUR MAJESTY! ARE YOU INJURED?
WHO DID THIS?
HIM?!
THIS BOY SAVED ME. GIVE HIM HIS OWN CHAMBERS...
PROMOTE HIM TO THE RANK OF PAGE.

I'M A FAILURE.
WHY DIDN'T I JUMP DOWN FROM THE BED ALONE?
I INSTINCTIVELY SAVED THE QUEEN. IS IT BECAUSE SHE LOOKS LIKE HIROMI?
YOU?! YOU'RE THE HUMAN SLAVE WHO SAVED HER MAJESTY AND GOT PROMOTED TO PAGE?
WHO ARE YOU?
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME?
HMPH!
YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE.
SURELY YOU'VE SEEN ME ON TV!
NO, NOT EVEN ON A COMMERCIAL.

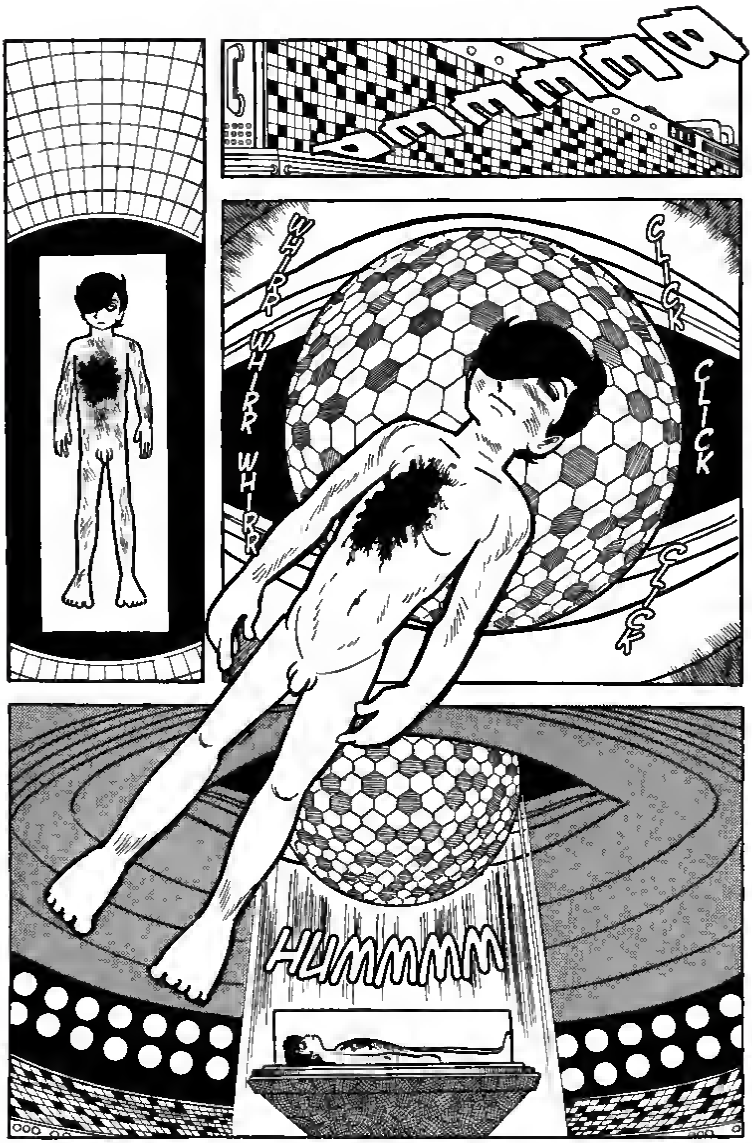
I'M PRIME MINISTER BIBIMBA.
PRIME MINISTER ?
...
GLARE
...
GLARE
GLARE
HUMAN BEINGS ARE INFERIOR, FILTHY, FOUL-SMELLING CREATURES.
HER MAJESTY MAY TOLERATE YOU, BUT I WON'T!

TAKE HIM TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY BUT DON'T TELL THE QUEEN. SAVE HIM TO THE COMPUTER.
HAVE THEM REPLICATE HIS FACE AND BODY
TO MAKE A REPLACEMENT SYNTHIAN PAGE, HURRY!

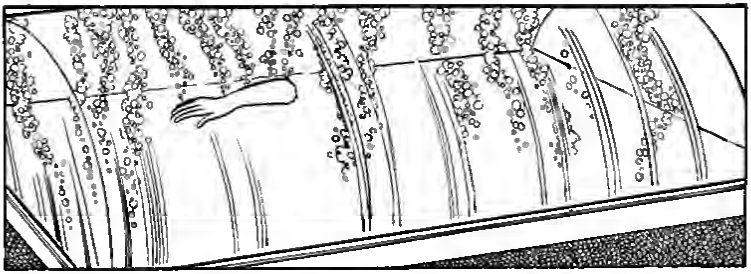

VROOM

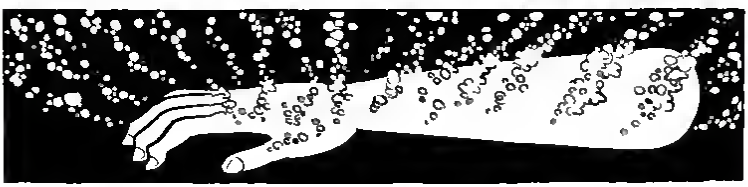


THIS IS THE ROYAL ACADEMY.
PRIME MINISTER'S ORDERS, HMM? I SEE...


BEEP
WHIRR WHIRR WHIRR
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
HUMMMM

MMMMM
CLANG
BZZT
BZZT
BZZT
BZZT
BZZT
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG

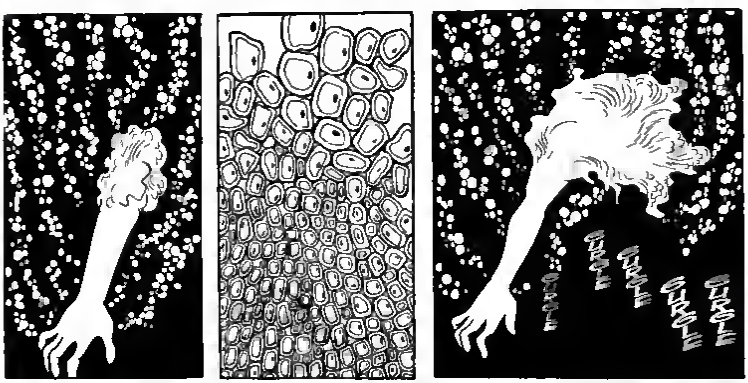




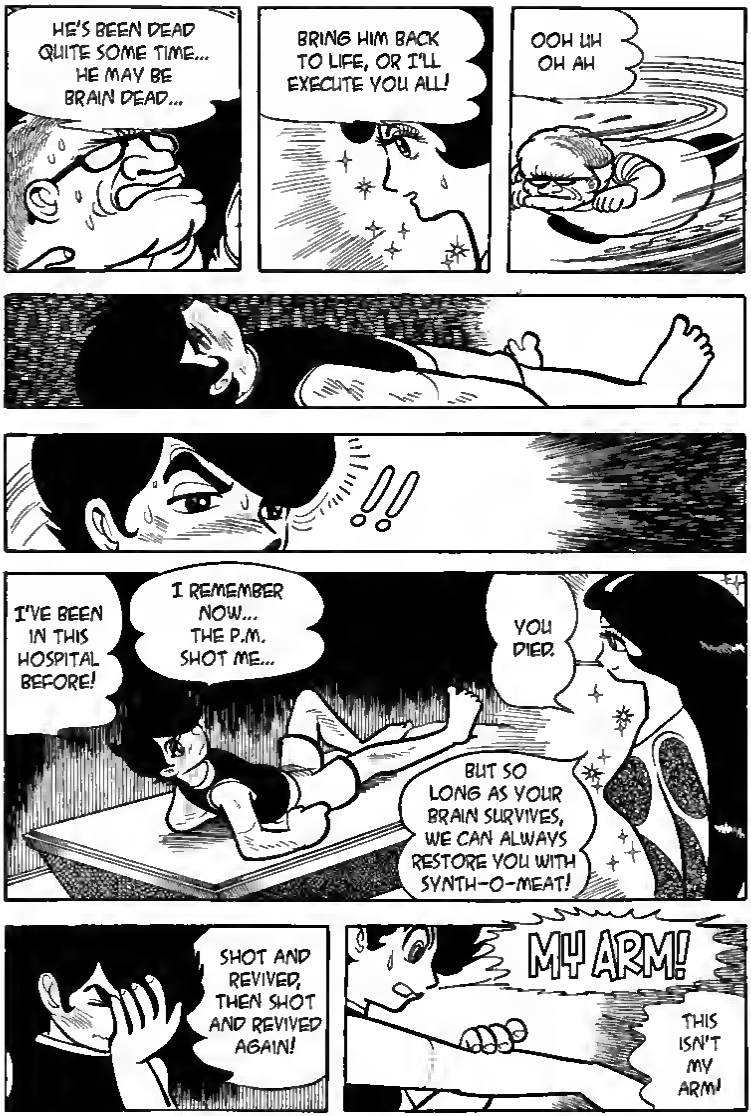
CLONING

IN 1964, THE AMERICAN SCIENTIST DR F C STEWARD MADE IT KNOWN THAT WHEN A PIECE OF CARROT WAS CULTIVATED IN A SPECIAL MEDIUM, ITS CELLS REPRODUCED TO FORM A NEW CARROT THAT WAS AN EXACT REPLICA OF THE ORIGINAL. SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH FOUND THAT ANY SPECIES OF PLANT COULD BE REPRODUCED IN THE SAME MANNER UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS. IN OTHER WORDS, INFINITE COPIES OF A SINGLE ORGANISM COULD BE PRODUCED WITHOUT SEEDS!

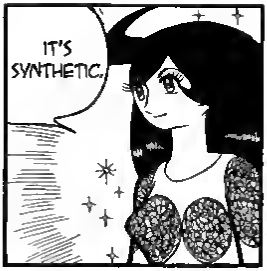
DR J B GURDON CALLED THE PHENOMENON "CLONING" AND SUCCEEDED IN GROWING A TADPOLE FROM A CELL NUCLEUS. THE CLONED FROG WAS THE PERFECT TWIN OF ITS ORIGINAL. IT IS SAID THAT, ONE DAY, EVEN HUMAN CLONING WILL BE POSSIBLE

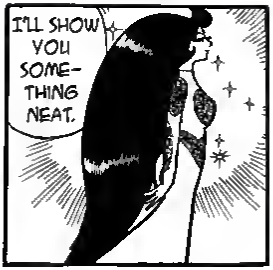


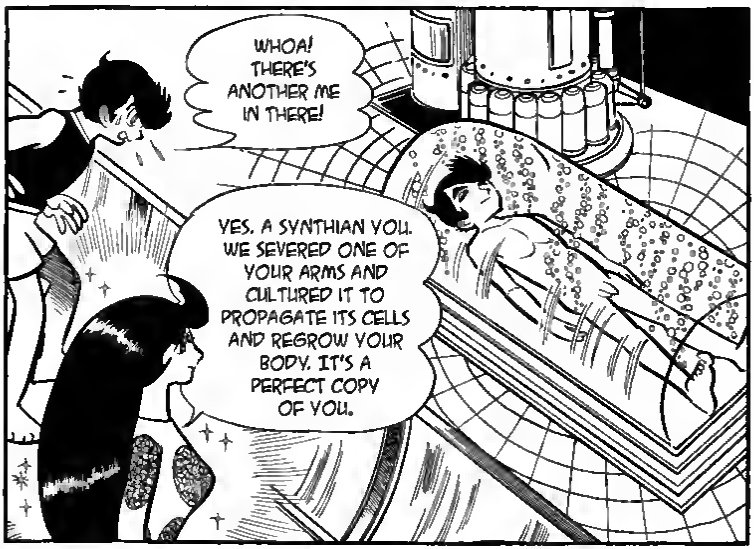
SUCK
SUCK
SUCK
SUCK
SUCK
SUCK
HM?
YOUR MAJESTY ...
WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT THE BOY'S BODY HERE WITHOUT MY PERMISSION?
UM, UH...
PRIME MINISTER'S ORDERS...
I'M AWARE THAT THE P.M. HAS VIOLATED MY AUTHORITY WITH REGARDS TO MY PAGE.
I WANT THE BOY RESUSCITATED! REVIVE HIM, THAT'S AN ORDER!

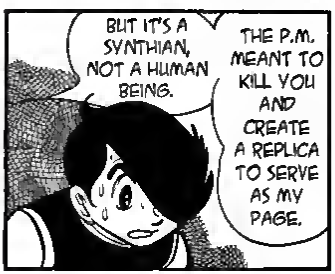

HE'S BEEN DEAD QUITE SOME TIME... HE MAY BE BRAIN DEAD...
BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE, OR I'LL EXECUTE YOU ALL!
OOH UH OH AH
!!
I'VE BEEN IN THIS HOSPITAL BEFORE!
I REMEMBER NOW... THE P.M. SHOT ME...
YOU DIED.
BUT SO LONG AS YOUR BRAIN SURVIVES, WE CAN ALWAYS RESTORE YOU WITH SYNTH-O-MEAT!
SHOT AND REVIVED, THEN SHOT AND REVIVED AGAIN!
MY ARM!
THIS ISN'T MY ARM!

THERE'S A SEAM HERE...

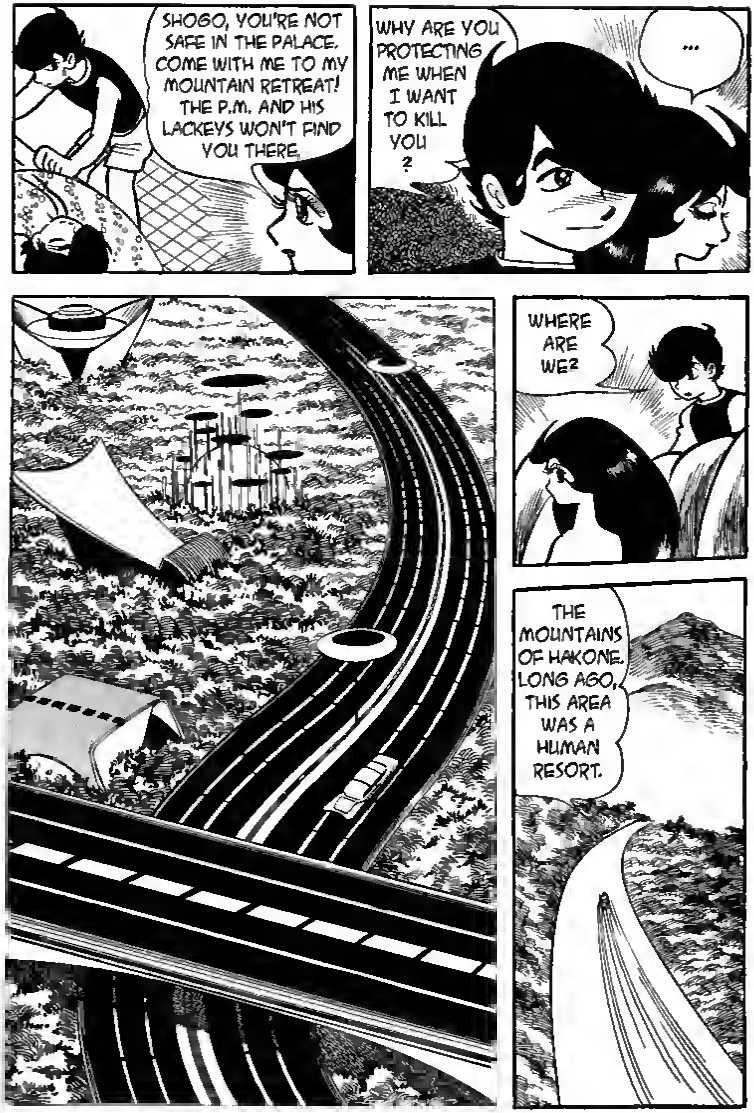

IT'S SYNTHETIC.

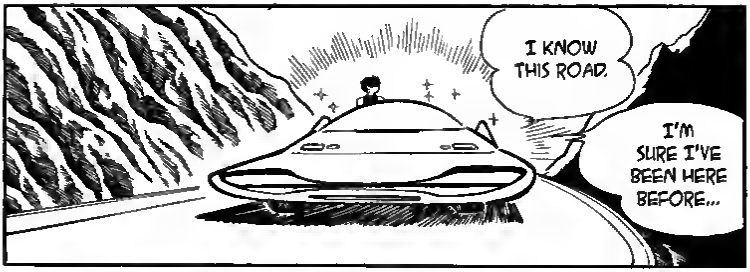

I'LL SHOW YOU SOME-THING NEAT.

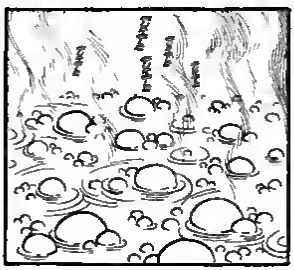

WHOA! THERE'S ANOTHER ME IN THERE!
YES. A SYNTHIAN YOU. WE SEVERED ONE OF YOUR ARMS AND CULTURED IT TO PROPAGATE ITS CELLS AND REGROW YOUR BODY. IT'S A PERFECT COPY OF YOU.


BUT IT'S A SYNTHIAN, NOT A HUMAN BEING.
THE P.M. MEANT TO KILL YOU AND CREATE A REPLICA TO SERVE AS MY PAGE.

AND YOU SAVED ME...
NOW WE'RE EVEN!


SHOGO, YOU'RE NOT SAFE IN THE PALACE. COME WITH ME TO MY MOUNTAIN RETREAT! THE P.M. AND HIS LACKEYS WON'T FIND YOU THERE.
WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING ME WHEN I WANT TO KILL YOU ?
...
WHERE ARE WE?
THE MOUNTAINS OF HAKONE. LONG AGO, THIS AREA WAS A HUMAN RESORT.

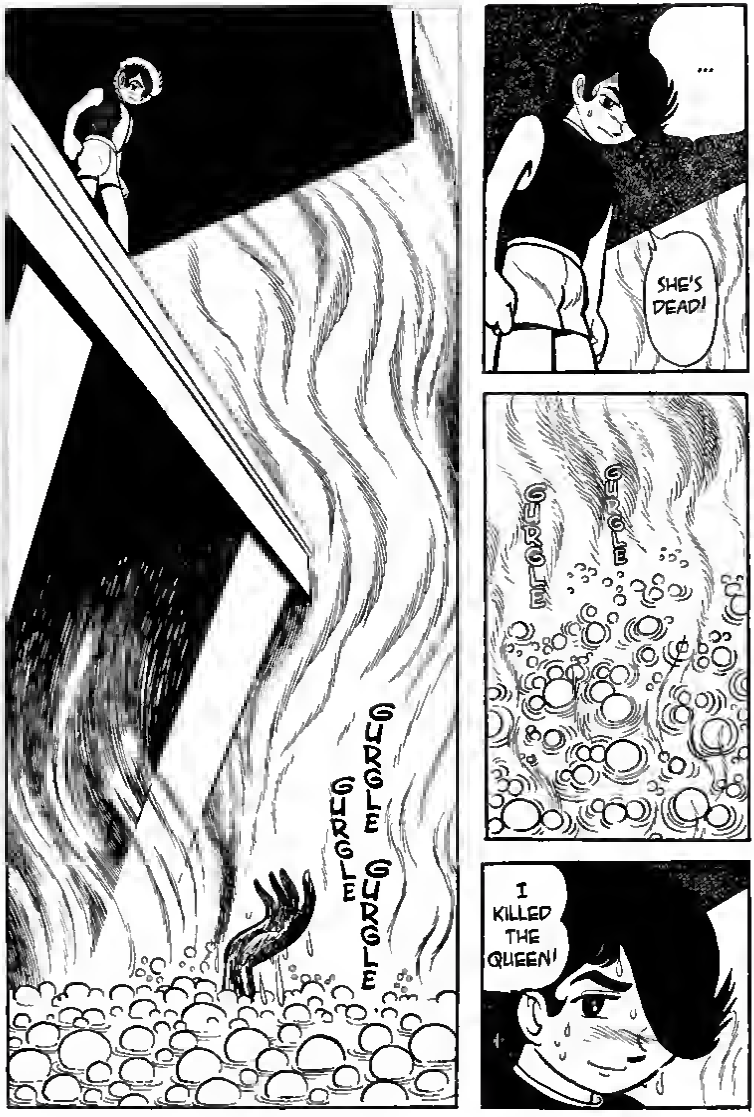

I KNOW THIS ROAD.
I'M SURE I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE...



THIS IS MY RETREAT.
...
SHOGO, DO YOU KNOW WHY I'VE BROUGHT YOU HERE?
WHEN I ORDERED YOU TO PERFORM THE "ACT OF LOVE" FOR ME IN MY BED... I FELT SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS I HAD NEVER FELT BEFORE.
I FELT TICKLISH ... EXHILA-RATED ...
I WANT TO KNOW MORE!

QUEEN, LET ME BE VERY CLEAR. I CAN'T LOVE YOU.
SLAP
AS QUEEN OF THE SYNTHIANS, ALL I DESIRE IS THAT WHICH YOU HUMANS POSSESS BUT WE SYNTHIANS DO NOT: THE ABILITY TO LOVE!
EM-BRACE ME!
AHH!

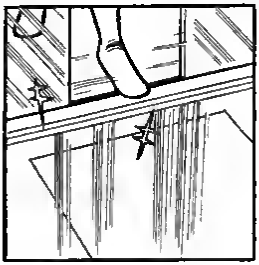
SHO...GO!
SLASH
E-NNE

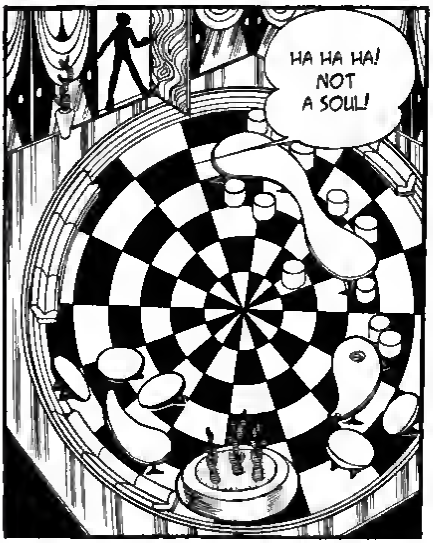

...
SHE'S DEAD!
GURGLE GURGLE
GURGLE GURGLE
GURGLE GURGLE
I KILLED THE QUEEN!

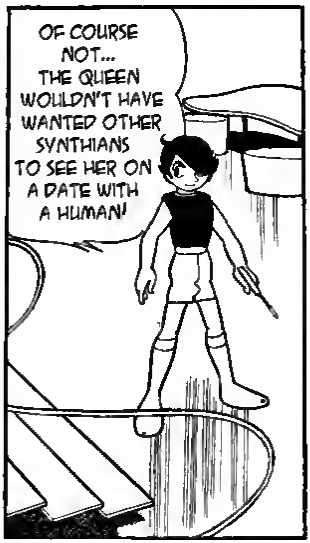
I KILLED THE SYNTHIAN QUEEN!
I FLUBBED THE BOMBING, BUT THIS TIME I DID IT!
HER BODY DIDN'T LAST 10 SECONDS IN THAT SWAMPY HELL!

A GUN!
IT'S MINE, NOW!

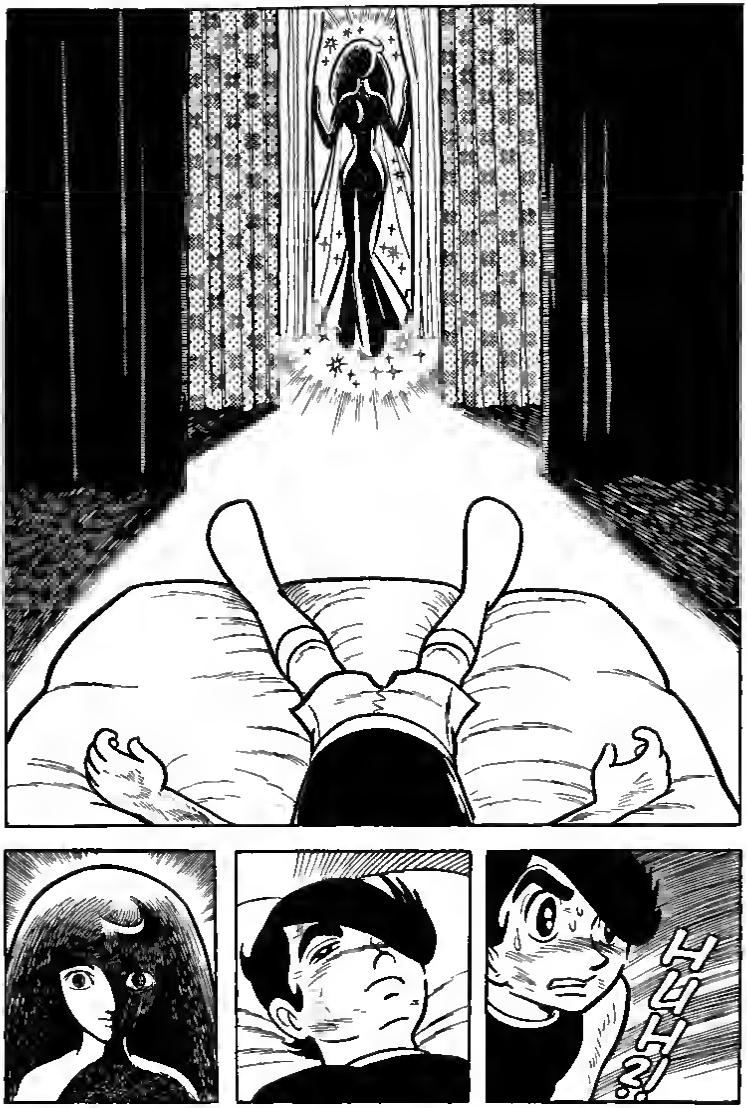
IS THERE ANYONE ELSE HERE?




HA HA HA! NOT A SOUL!

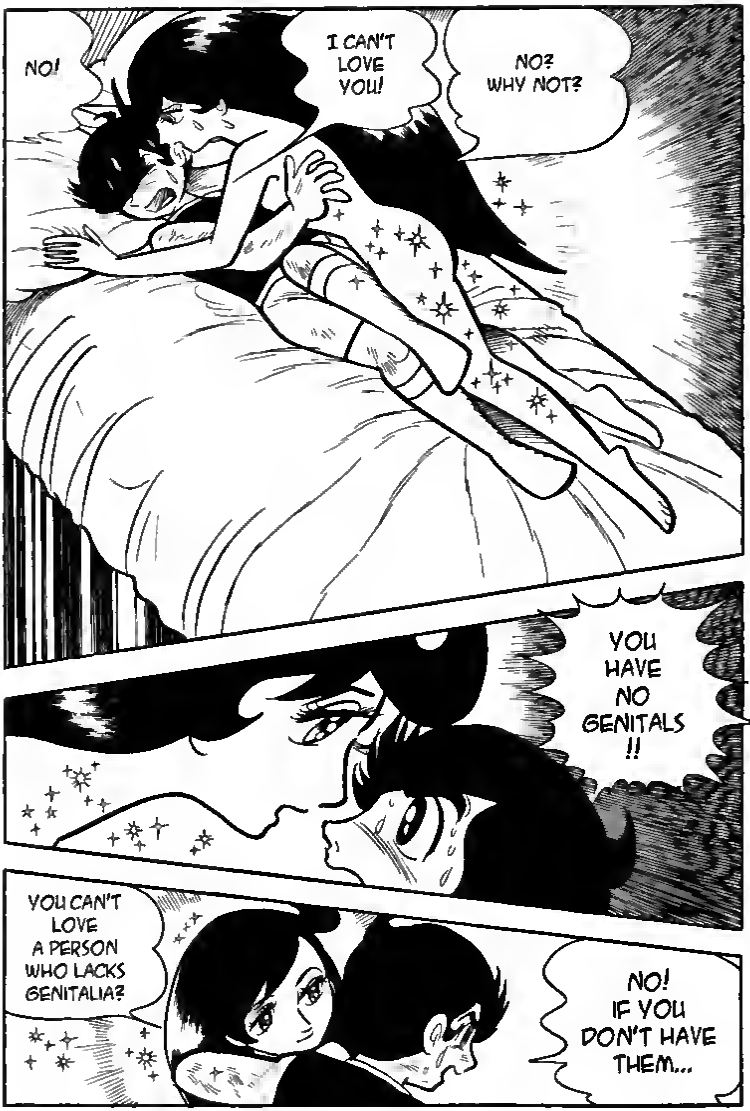

OF COURSE NOT... THE QUEEN WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED OTHER SYNTHIANS TO SEE HER ON A DATE WITH A HUMAN!

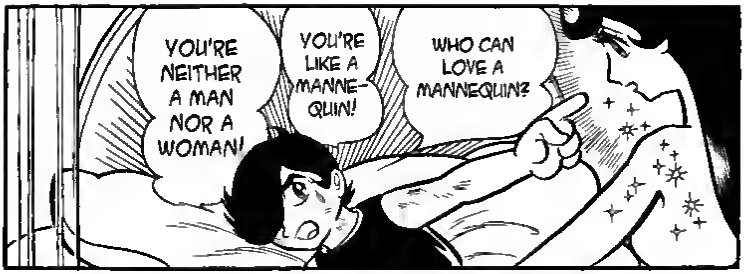
I SUDDENLY FEEL AWFULLY TIRED...
PLOP
AAAH
I'M EXHAUSTED! MY MOOD ISN'T SO GREAT, EITHER.
I GUESS... I FEEL GUILTY ...
ZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZZ
I KILLED ... A LIVING ... THING ...
EVEN... IF SHE WAS... A SYNTHIAN ...


ハハハ?!

IT'S THE QUEEN!
B-B-BUT YOU'RE D-DEAD...
ARE YOU A GHOST?
DON'T BE SO SURPRISED!
HOW DID YOU GET OUT OF THAT SWAMP?
I DIDN'T. I JUST ARRIVED HERE.
ARRIVED?!
ARE YOU A DIFFERENT PERSON?
I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY THAT...
MY PREVIOUS BODY DIED, SO I LEFT IT.

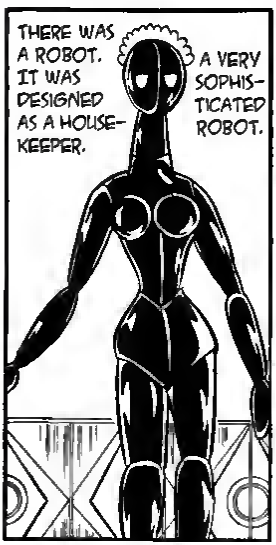
BEFORE COMING HERE, I HAD THEM CUT A FINGER OFF MY PREVIOUS BODY AND STORE IT AT THE SCIENCE CENTER.
THEY CULTURED AND GREW THAT FINGER INTO ANOTHER ME.
IN OTHER WORDS... YOU WERE REBORN?
YES. AND THIS BODY IS IDENTICAL TO THE ONE I HAD BEFORE. MY THOUGHTS ARE IDENTICAL, TOO!
NOW, SHOGO... PERFORM THE "ACT OF LOVE."
UHH
ENOUGH!
THAT'S AN ORDER.
LOVE ME!

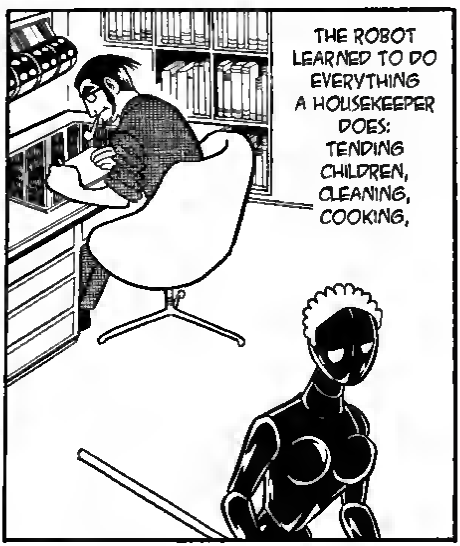

NO!
I CAN'T LOVE YOU!
NO? WHY NOT?
YOU HAVE NO GENITALS !!
YOU CAN'T LOVE A PERSON WHO LACKS GENITALIA?
NO! IF YOU DON'T HAVE THEM...

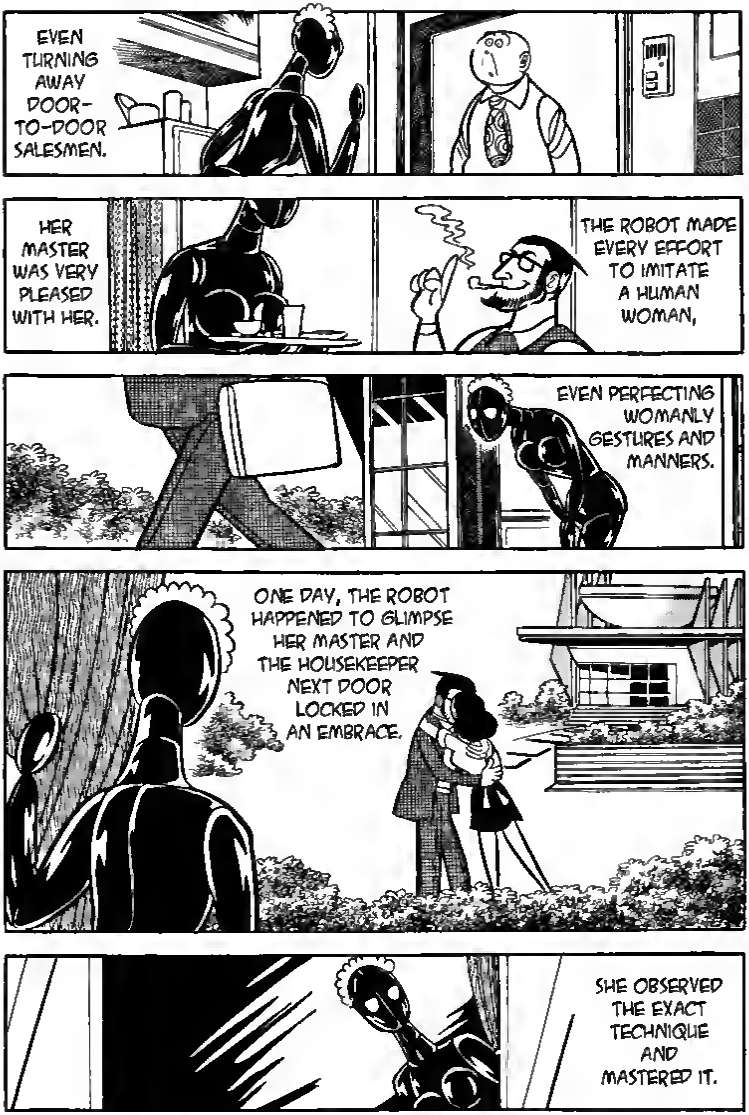

YOU'RE NEITHER A MAN NOR A WOMAN!
YOU'RE LIKE A MANNE-QUIN!
WHO CAN LOVE A MANNEQUIN?

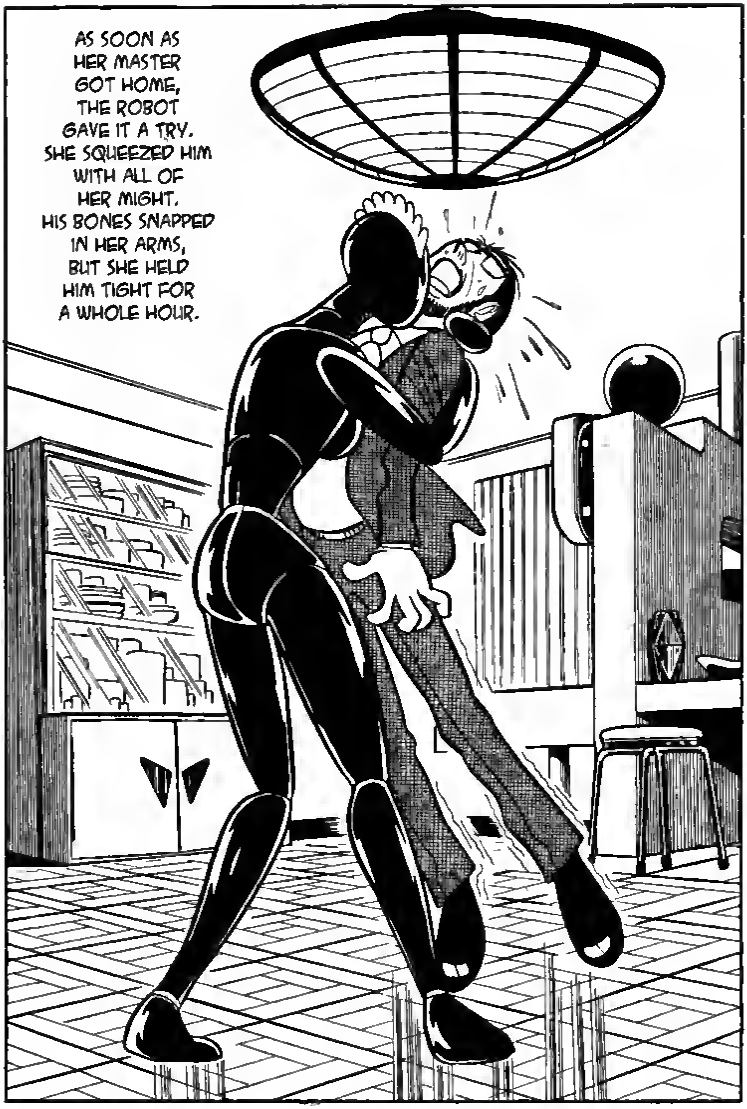
THEN WHY DO I HAVE...
THIS LOVELY BOSOM?
BECAUSE YOU'RE MODELED AFTER A HUMAN BEING, BUT YOU'RE INCAPABLE OF LOVE!

LISTEN, QUEEN... LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...


THERE WAS A ROBOT. IT WAS DESIGNED AS A HOUSE-KEEPER.
A VERY SOPHIS-TICATED ROBOT.


THE ROBOT LEARNED TO DO EVERYTHING A HOUSEKEEPER DOES: TENDING CHILDREN, CLEANING, COOKING,


EVEN TURNING AWAY DOOR-TO-DOOR SALESMEN.
HER MASTER WAS VERY PLEASED WITH HER.
THE ROBOT MADE EVERY EFFORT TO IMITATE A HUMAN WOMAN,
EVEN PERFECTING WOMANLY GESTURES AND MANNERS.
ONE DAY, THE ROBOT HAPPENED TO GLIMPSE HER MASTER AND THE HOUSEKEEPER NEXT DOOR LOCKED IN AN EMBRACE.
SHE OBSERVED THE EXACT TECHNIQUE AND MASTERED IT.

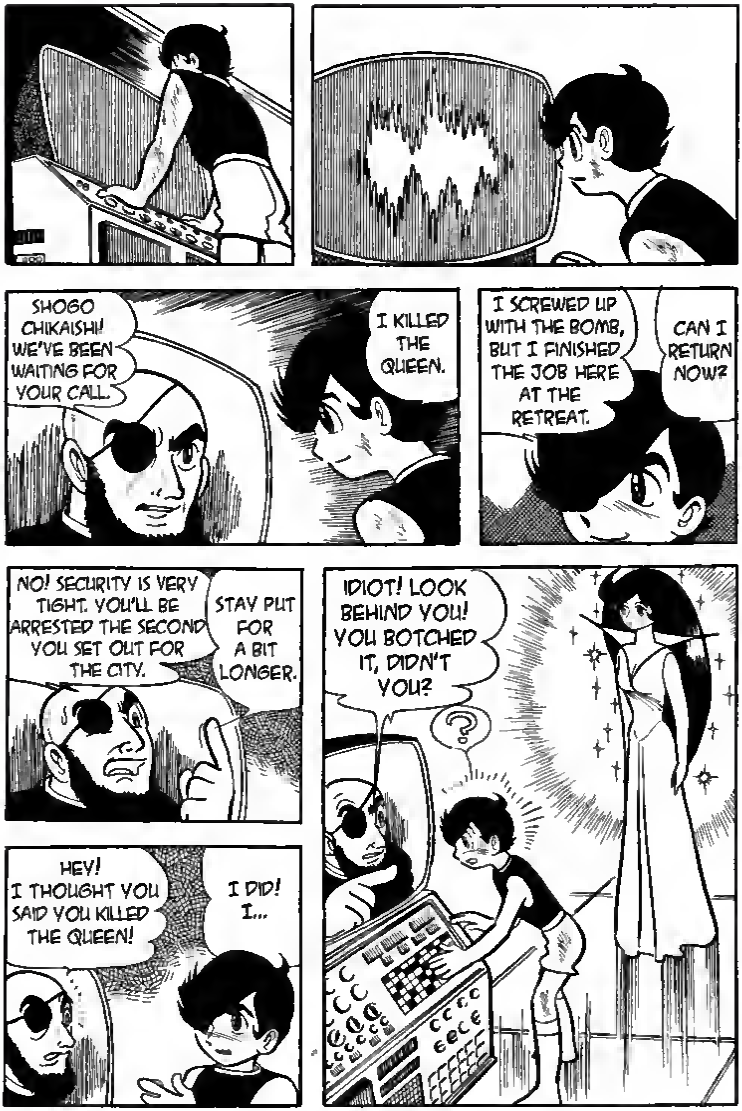

AS SOON AS HER MASTER GOT HOME, THE ROBOT GAVE IT A TRY. SHE SQUEEZED HIM WITH ALL OF HER MIGHT. HIS BONES SNAPPED IN HER ARMS, BUT SHE HELD HIM TIGHT FOR A WHOLE HOUR.

THE ROBOT STARED AT HER MASTER'S CRUMPLED BODY AND COCKED HER HEAD.
I LOVED YOU SO. WASN'T IT ENOUGH?
ROBOTS AND SYNTHIANS MAY NOT BE THE SAME, BUT BOTH WERE ORIGINALLY CREATED BY HUMAN BEINGS.
SYNTHIANS MAY SEE HUMANS AS INFERIOR AND REPULSIVE... BUT LOVE... LOVE BELONGS TO HUMAN BEINGS!
TRY AS AN ARTIFICIAL BEING MIGHT, YOU CAN'T IMITATE LOVE.
THAT'S NOT TRUE! I'M ON THE VERGE OF MASTERING LOVE!
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR MY PROOF?
I LOVE YOU!

DON'T BE ABSURD!
IT'S TRUE!
I LOVE YOU!
THAT'S AN ILLUSION. SYNTHIANS CAN'T FALL IN LOVE!
YOU'RE INCAPABLE OF REAL LOVE!
IN THE OLD ERA, A HUMAN AUTHOR WROTE, "FOR LOVE ALONE HAS NATURE PUT US IN THIS WORLD."
STILL FAKING !
GIVE IT A REST !!
NOW ...
GET OUT OF MY WAY SO I CAN ESCAPE!
IF YOU TRY TO STOP ME, I'LL KILL YOU FOR REAL THIS TIME!

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO GIVE ME ORDERS... I'M THE QUEEN!
SHOOT ALL YOU LIKE!
DARING ME...
ZAP!
THUD
...
BLASTED MANNEQUIN ...

...
I'LL CALL HQ AND THEN GET OUT OF HERE. IT ISN'T SAFE!
I CAN'T WASTE ANY MORE TIME.
SIZZLE


SHOGO CHIKAISHI! WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOUR CALL.
I KILLED THE QUEEN.
I SCREWED UP WITH THE BOMB, BUT I FINISHED THE JOB HERE AT THE RETREAT.
CAN I RETURN NOW?
NO! SECURITY IS VERY TIGHT. YOU'LL BE ARRESTED THE SECOND YOU SET OUT FOR THE CITY.
STAY PUT FOR A BIT LONGER.
IDIOT! LOOK BEHIND YOU! YOU BOTCHED IT, DIDN'T YOU?
?
HEY! I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU KILLED THE QUEEN!
I DID! I...

N-NOT AGAIN !!
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU KILL ME, I'LL JUST BE RESYNTHESIZED AND APPEAR BEFORE YOU...
GIVE ME A BREAK!
GO AHEAD, SHOOT ME! RIGHT NOW!
WITH THAT GUN!
H-HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO DO THIS?

ENOUGH ALREADY ...
SHOGO... OVER HERE!
ACK!
REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID? THAT SYNTHIANS COULD ONLY IMITATE LOVE BECAUSE WE HAVE NO GENITALS?
I HAD THEM PERFORM PLASTIC SURGERY AT THE ROYAL CENTER!

NOW MY BODY IS EXACTLY LIKE THAT OF A HUMAN BEING!
LOOK AT ME NOW, SHOGO!

I'M THROUGH KILLING YOU!

YOU WIN...
IF YOU WANT TO BE HUMAN SO MUCH THAT YOU'LL UNDERGO PLASTIC SURGERY,
THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS.
SHOGO... TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.
THERE'S NOTHING MUCH TO TELL.
I'M FROM THE OLD QUARTER OF TOKYO ...
I DON'T CARE WHERE YOU'RE FROM!
I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR LIFE, EVER SINCE YOU WERE BORN!
MY MOTHER DIDN'T LOVE ME AT ALL...
AND I HATED HER, TOO.

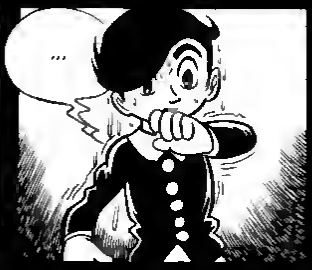
SO THERE WAS NO "LOVE"?
I GUESS NOT.
BUT YOU SAID THAT HUMAN BEINGS HAVE LOVE, AND THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD SYNTHIANS TRY, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO IMITATE IT...
WAS THAT A LIE?
...
WELL?
HA HA HA HA
WE SAID HATEFUL THINGS TO EACH OTHER... AND MAYBE WE HAD SOME HATE IN OUR HEARTS TOO...
BUT DEEP DOWN... THERE WAS SOMETHING MORE... SEE?
NO! LOVE IS SOMETHING... LOVE IS MORE... MORE COMPLICATED!

FOR EXAMPLE, ONE TIME...
GET OUT! SHOGO, YOU'RE NO LONGER MY SON!
I HOPE YOU DIE IN A GUTTER SOMEWHERE
FINE. WHO NEEDS A MOTHER LIKE YOU ANYWAY!
LATER, YOU OLD HAG!
EEEEEE!
WATCH OUT!

WHOOSH
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MOTHER'S EYES THAT TIME... I'D NEVER SEEN HER THAT WAY BEFORE HER EYES SPOKE VOLUMES...
THEY SAID, "I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE OK."

EVEN WHEN YOU HATE SOMEONE, SOMETIMES SOMETHING UNEXPECTED CAN UNEARTH FEELINGS FROM DEEP IN YOUR HEART.
CAN YOU UNDER-STAND HOW THAT FEELS?
WANNA HEAR ANOTHER STORY?
I HAD STARTED TORTURING ANIMALS, ONE DAY ...
A STRAY CAT GAVE BIRTH TO SOME KITTENS OFF BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.
IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE HOW SHE DOTED ON THEM. SHE LICKED THEM ALL DAY LONG. SHE EVEN LICKED UP THEIR TURDS.
IT MADE ME SO ANGRY!
I DECIDED TO SNATCH THE KITTENS AWAY AND STOMP THEM TO DEATH!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MOTHER CAT DID?

SHE ATE HER OWN BABIES! I WAS SHOCKED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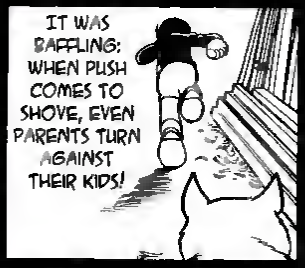
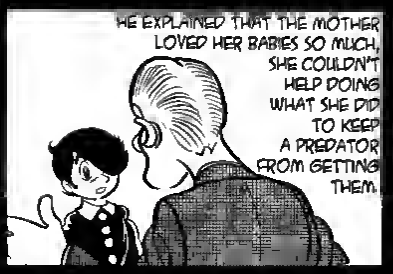

IT WAS BAFFLING: WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, EVEN PARENTS TURN AGAINST THEIR KIDS!

BUT LATER, WHEN I ASKED MY TEACHER AT SCHOOL...


HE EXPLAINED THAT THE MOTHER LOVED HER BABIES SO MUCH, SHE COULDN'T HELP DOING WHAT SHE DID TO KEEP A PREDATOR FROM GETTING THEM.

IS THAT SOMETHING A SYNTHIAN CAN UNDER-STAND?

ENOUGH OF THESE STORIES!

I ONLY WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOU!
TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR-SELF!

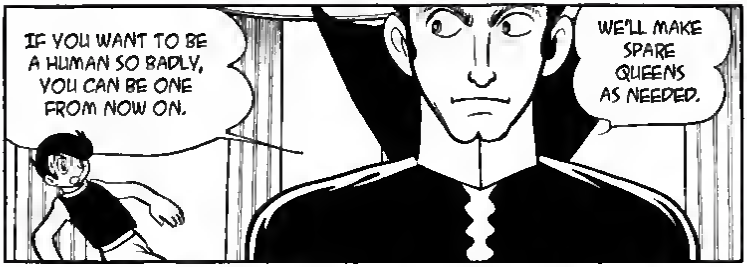
WHEN DID YOU MEET HIROMI WATARI?
I CAN'T REMEMBER...
HOW DID YOU TWO FALL IN LOVE?
CUT IT OUT!
I DON'T LOVE HER!
THAT'S A LIE.
NO, IT'S NOT!
I'VE NEVER LOVED A WOMAN!
REMEMBER WHAT YOU JUST TOLD ME? EVEN WHEN TWO PEOPLE HATE AND FIGHT WITH EACH OTHER, SOMETHING CAN EMERGE FROM DEEP DOWN WHEN THEY LEAST EXPECT IT, RIGHT?
DEEP IN YOUR HEART, YOU LOVE HIROMI WATARI. I CAN SENSE IT!
I HAVE THE SAME FACE AS HERS ...
THE SAME BODY, TOO ...

AND ON TOP OF THAT, I LOVE YOU!
SO WHY AREN'T YOU RESPONDING TO ME?
BECAUSE I'M A SYNTHIAN? I'M NO LONGER A SYNTHIAN! I'M JUST LIKE A HUMAN!!
OH, SHOGO, SHOGO... DON'T MAKE ME SUFFER! I BEG YOU... SEE WHAT'S INSIDE MY HEART...
SHOGO!
IS LOVE ALWAYS SO PAINFUL ?

I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND YOU HERE, YOUR MAJESTY...

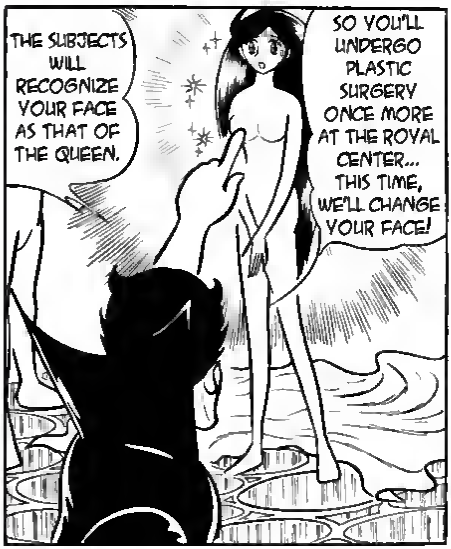
BIBIMBA!
QUEEN, THE ROYAL CENTER HAS TOLD ME EVERY-THING.
PLEASE REMOVE YOUR CLOTHING.
I DON'T WANT TO USE FORCE... YOUR CLOTHING, PLEASE...
SO YOU *DID* HAVE THE OPERATION!

THE DOCTOR THERE TOLD ME HE'D GIVEN YOU IMITATION REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS.
I SEE NOW IT WAS TRUE. YOU INTENDED TO BECOME A HUMAN WOMAN?
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!
HE'S DONE NOTHING WRONG! I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO HARM HIM!
HA! WON'T ALLOW IT? WELL, I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO GET AWAY WITH THIS.
YOU MAY BE QUEEN, BUT YOU'RE SHAMELESS TO TURN YOURSELF INTO A HIDEOUS HUMAN.


IF YOU WANT TO BE A HUMAN SO BADLY, YOU CAN BE ONE FROM NOW ON.
WE'LL MAKE SPARE QUEENS AS NEEDED.

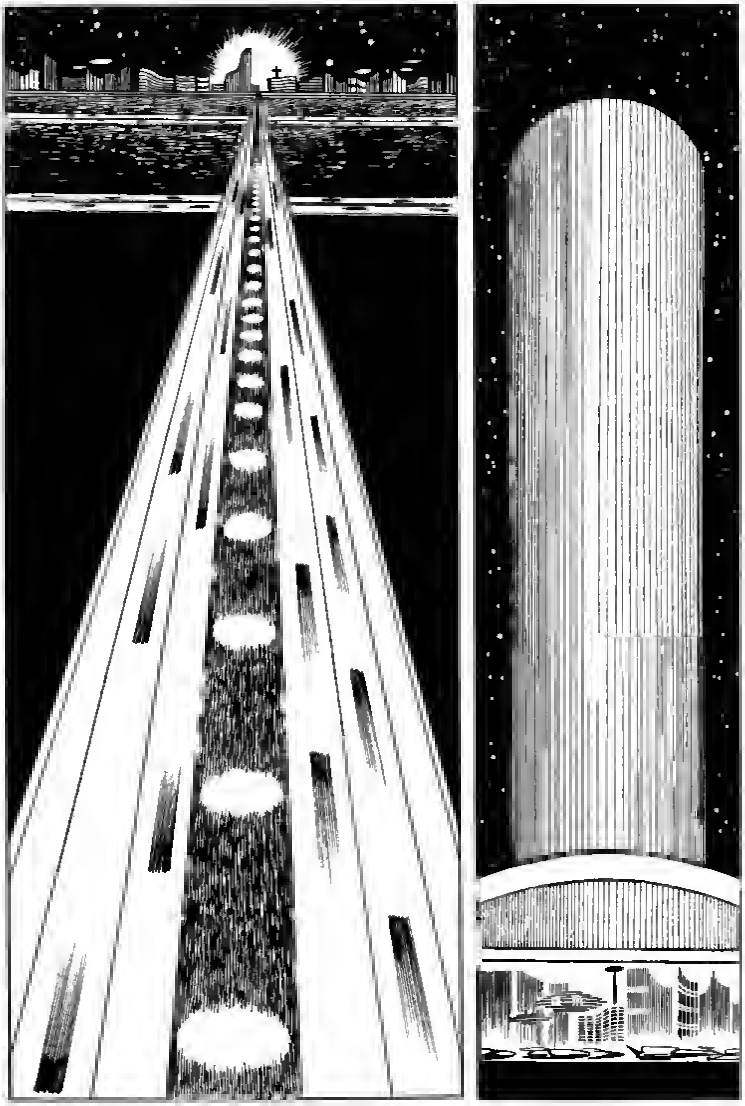
GO WITH THIS FILTHY BOY WHEREVER YOU PLEASE!

HOWEVER!


THE SUBJECTS WILL RECOGNIZE YOUR FACE AS THAT OF THE QUEEN.
SO YOU'LL UNDERGO PLASTIC SURGERY ONCE MORE AT THE ROYAL CENTER... THIS TIME, WE'LL CHANGE YOUR FACE!

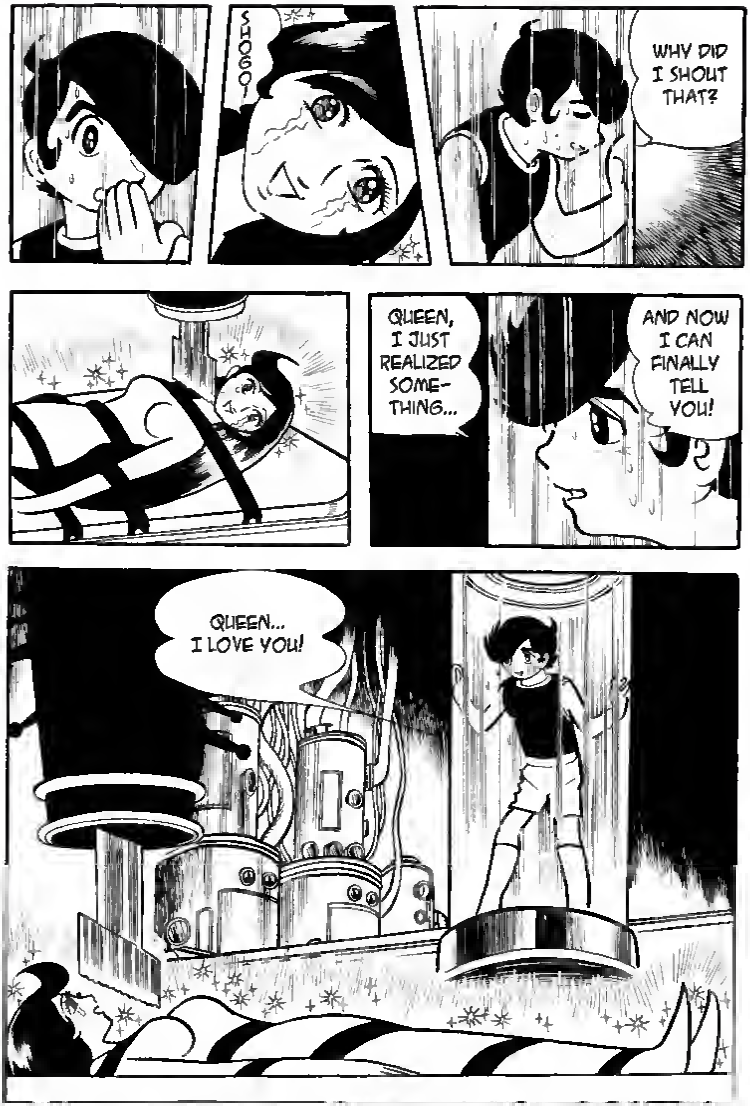
WE'LL GIVE YOU THE MOST HIDEOUS, LAUGHABLE FACE ON EARTH!
SEIZE HER!

AAAH!
BRING THE BRAT, TOO!

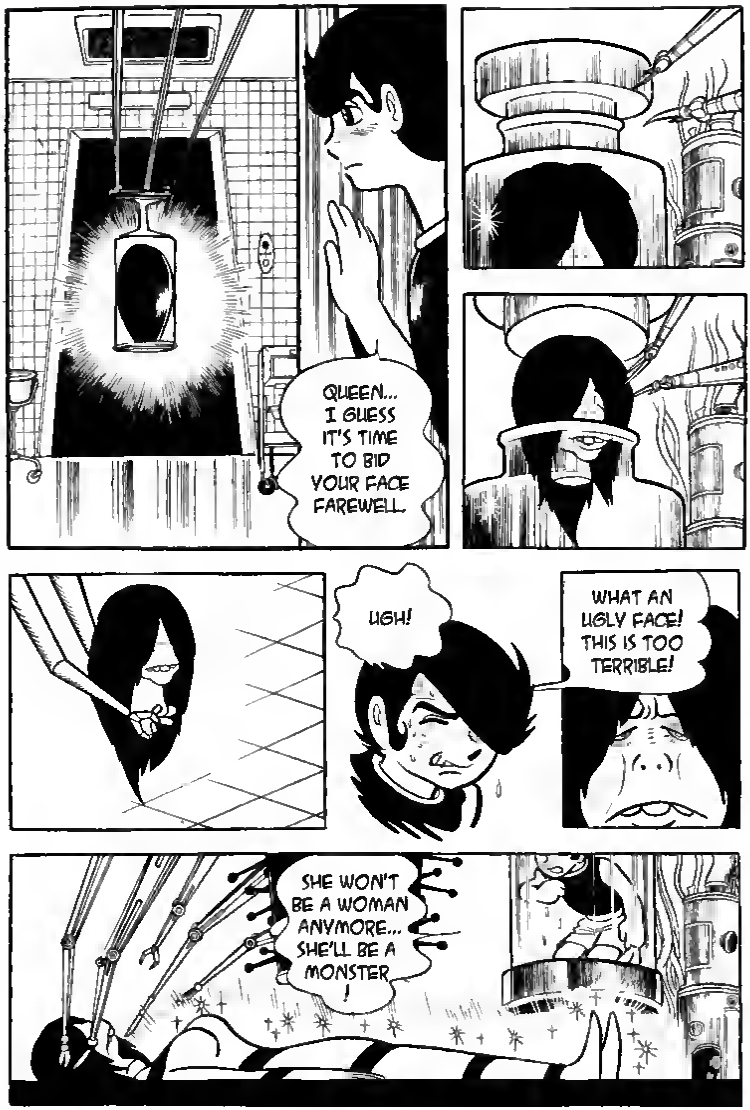


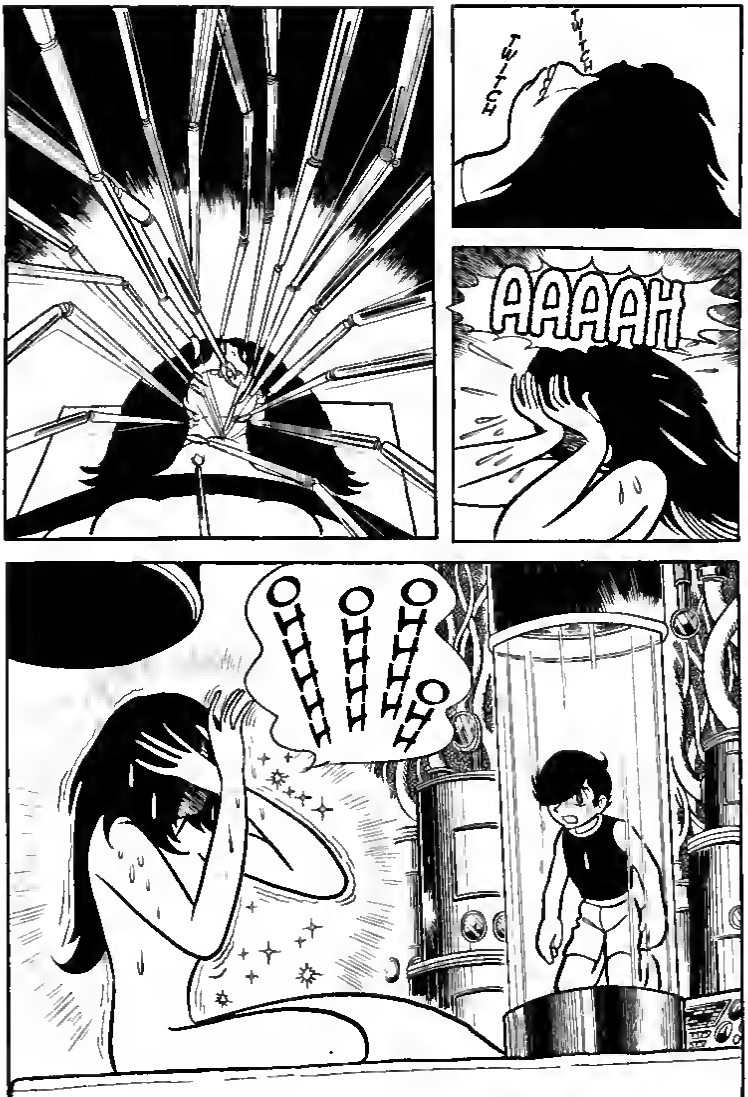
WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?
OR THIS ONE?
MAYBE THIS ONE?
HEHE, THIS LOOKS THE MOST HUMAN.
BIBIMBA, STOP!
YOU MAY NO LONGER ADDRESS ME BY NAME. NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN DEMOTED TO A HUMAN, YOU WILL CALL ME "YOUR EXCELLENCY"!
STAND THERE AND WATCH, BOY, AS THE QUEEN IS TRANSFORMED INTO SOMEONE ELSE!

NO! DON'T CHANGE THE QUEEN'S FACE!
...

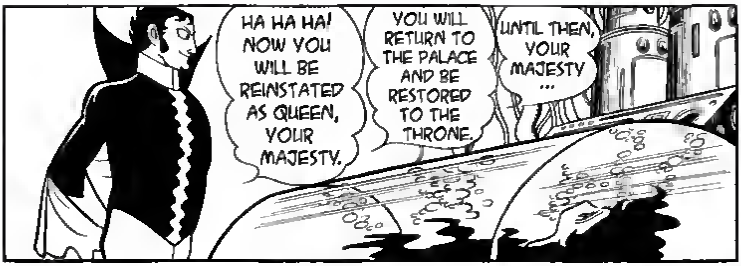

SHOGO!
WHY DID I SHOUT THAT?
QUEEN, I JUST REALIZED SOME-THING...
AND NOW I CAN FINALLY TELL YOU!
QUEEN... I LOVE YOU!

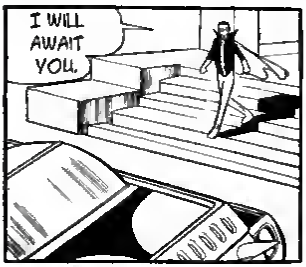
AAARGH!
NO! PLEASE! STOP! STOP!
AAAH!

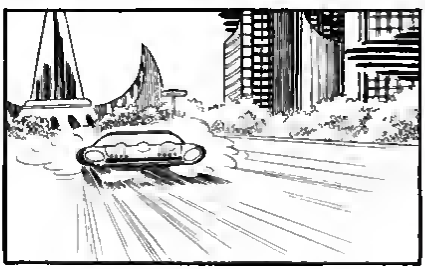

QUEEN... I GUESS IT'S TIME TO BID YOUR FACE FAREWELL.
UGH!
WHAT AN UGLY FACE! THIS IS TOO TERRIBLE!
SHE WON'T BE A WOMAN ANYMORE... SHE'LL BE A MONSTER!

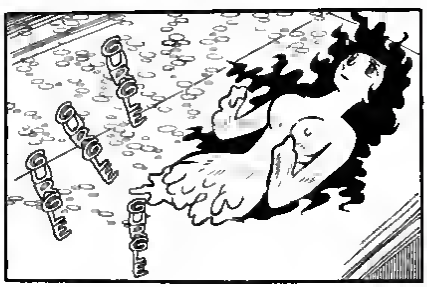

TWITCH
TWITCH
AAAAH
OHHHH
OHHHH
OHHHH

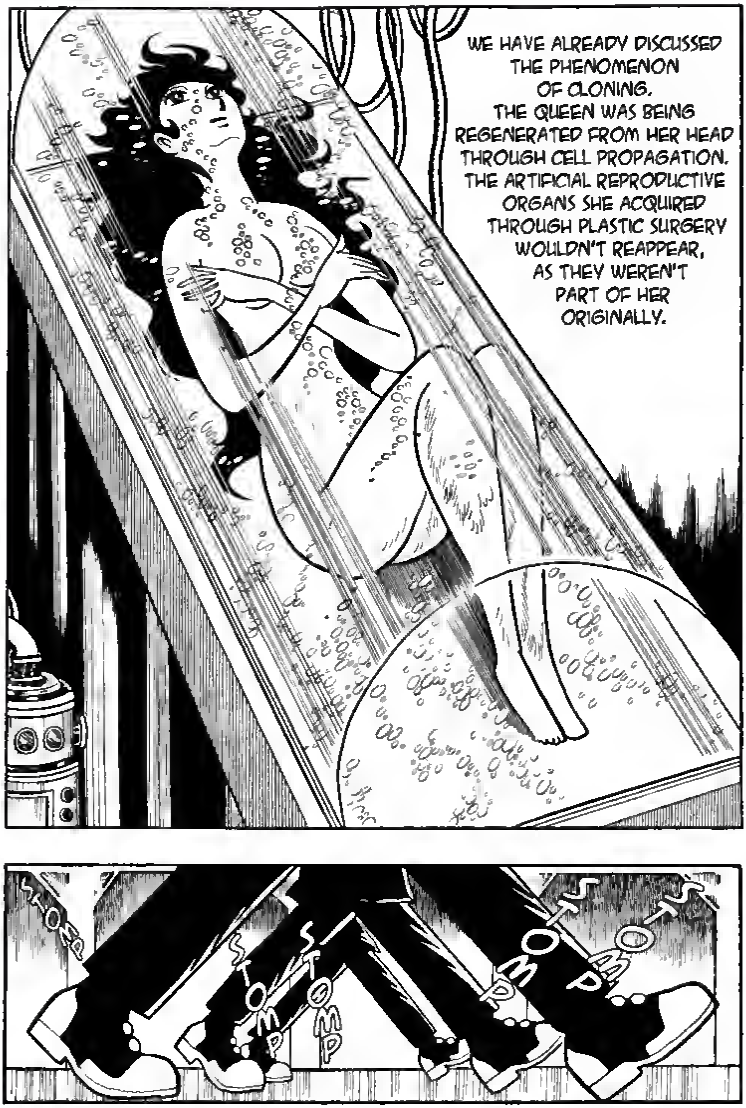
YOU POOR THING!
DON'T LOOK AT ME!
I HAVE BEEN REBORN...
I AM NO LONGER QUEEN SIGMA.
QUEEN SIGMA... IS IN THAT GLASS VESSEL...
NO! YOU ARE THE QUEEN!
I'M NOTHING BUT AN UGLY HUMAN WOMAN NOW. THE QUEEN YOU KNEW IS DEAD!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! SHE'S ALIVE, IN FRONT OF ME!
TOTTER
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK...
I WILL NEVER LET YOU GO!

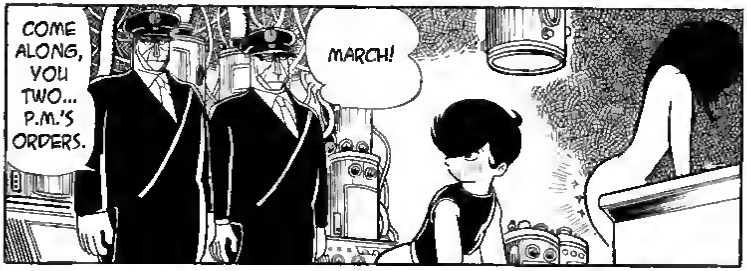

HA HA HA! NOW YOU WILL BE REINSTATED AS QUEEN, YOUR MAJESTY.
YOU WILL RETURN TO THE PALACE AND BE RESTORED TO THE THRONE.
UNTIL THEN, YOUR MAJESTY ...


I WILL AWAIT YOU.

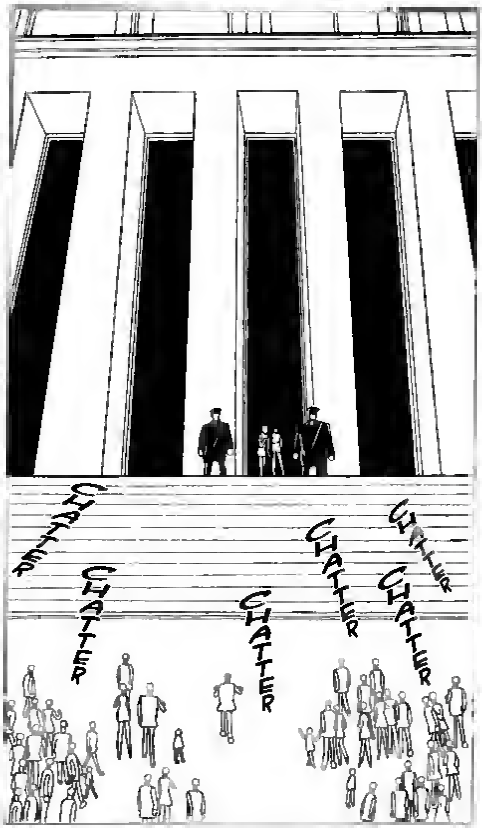


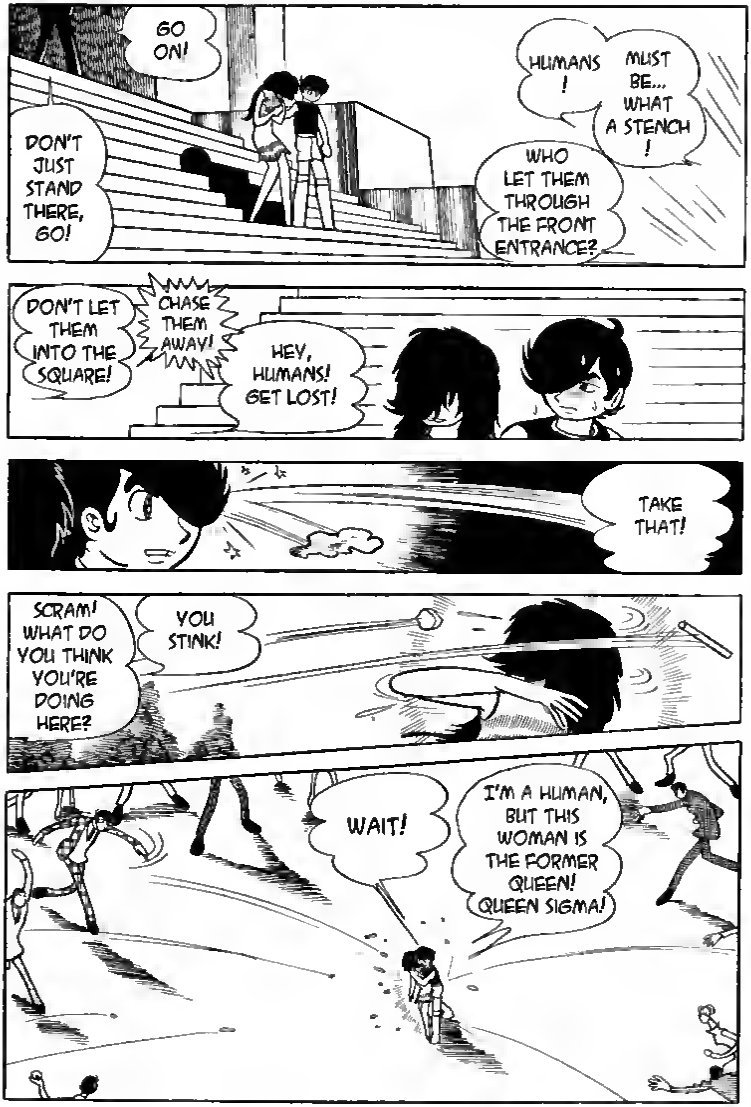



WE HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE PHENOMENON OF CLONING.
THE QUEEN WAS BEING REGENERATED FROM HER HEAD THROUGH CELL PROPAGATION.
THE ARTIFICIAL REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS SHE ACQUIRED THROUGH PLASTIC SURGERY WOULDN'T REAPPEAR, AS THEY WEREN'T PART OF HER ORIGINALLY.
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP

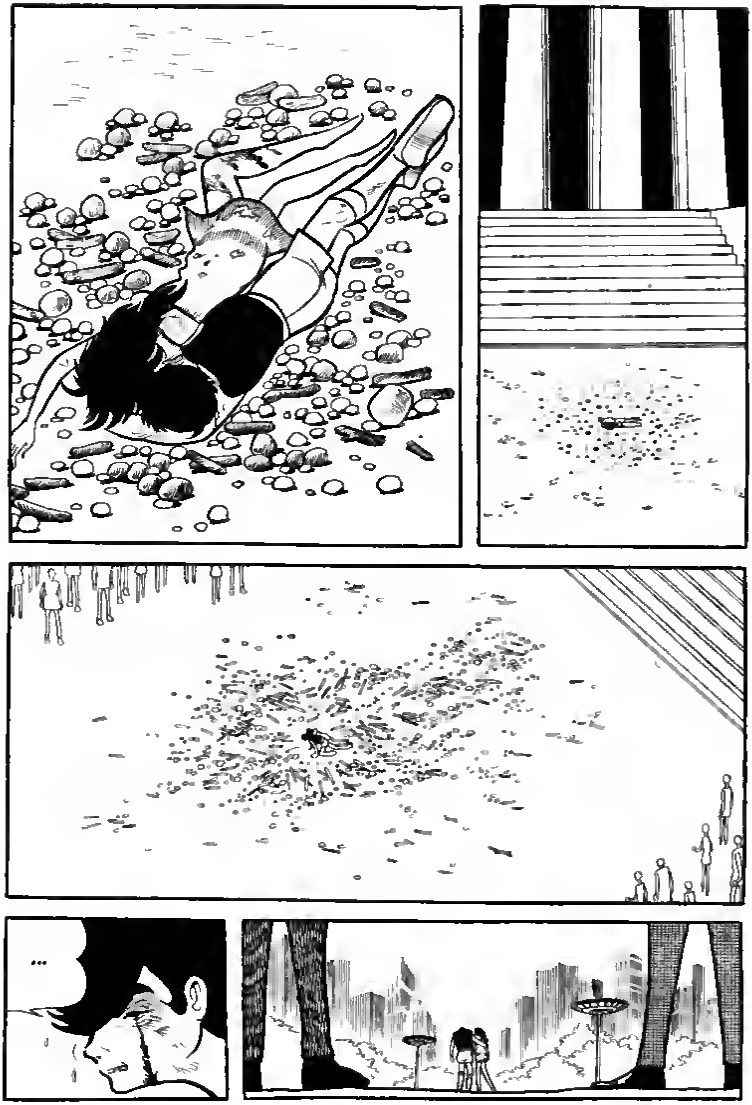

COME ALONG, YOU TWO... P.M.'S ORDERS.
MARCH!

TODAY HAPPENS TO BE A HOLIDAY. THERE'S A CROWD IN THE SQUARE.
GO BEFORE THEM AND SHOW YOUR FACE!


CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER


GO ON!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, GO!
HUMANS!
MUST BE... WHAT A STENCH!
WHO LET THEM THROUGH THE FRONT ENTRANCE?
DON'T LET THEM INTO THE SQUARE!
CHASE THEM AWAY!
HEY, HUMANS! GET LOST!
TAKE THAT!
SCRAM! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING HERE?
YOU STINK!
WAIT!
I'M A HUMAN, BUT THIS WOMAN IS THE FORMER QUEEN! QUEEN SIGMA!

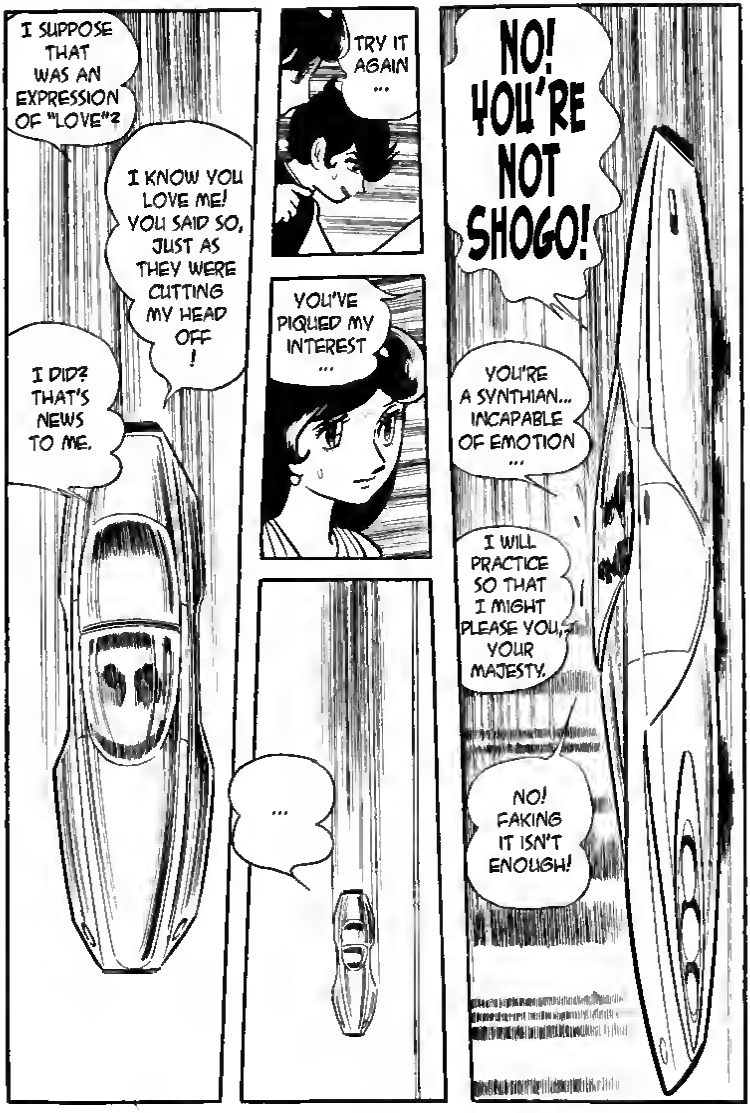
THE QUEEN, HUH? DID YOU HEAR THAT, EVERYBODY? IT'S QUEEN SIGMA!
GIMME A BREAK! WHY WOULD THE QUEEN BE ON A DATE WITH A HUMAN?
SHOW US YOUR FACE!
SHOW US YOUR FACE IF YOU'RE THE QUEEN!
BEAT IT!
FILTHY BEASTS!
PAM
PAM
PAM
PAM

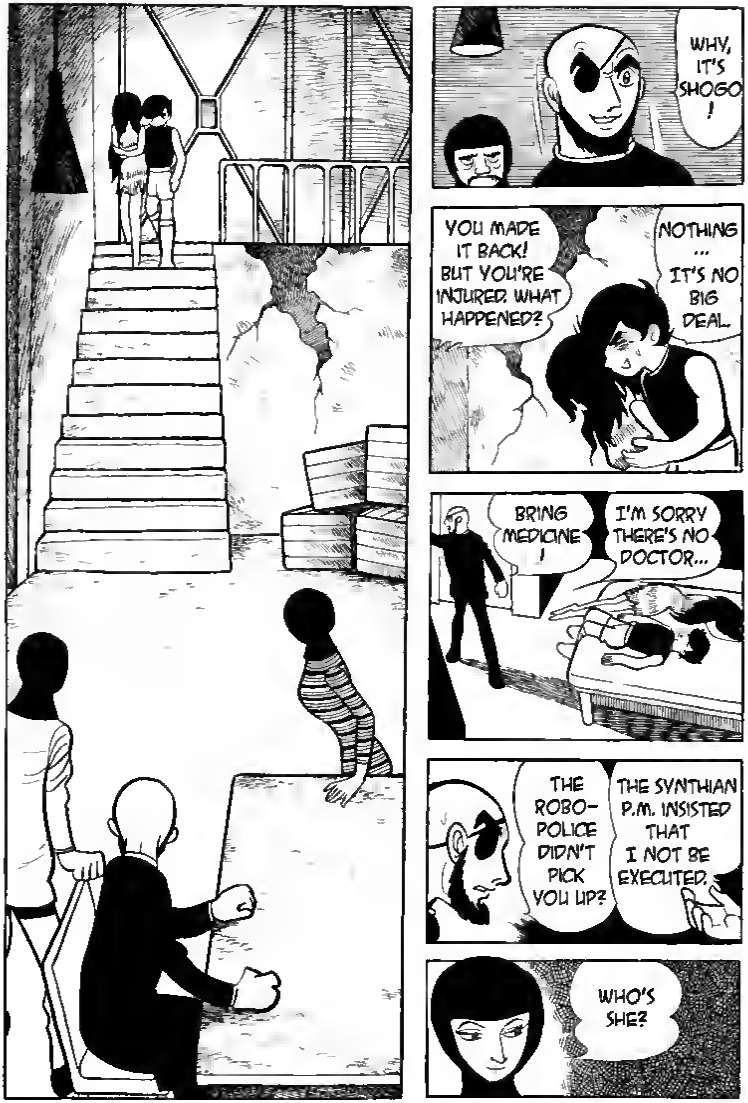


YOUR MAJESTY ...
YOU MAY AWAKEN NOW, YOUR MAJESTY. YOUR BODY IS COMPLETE.
SHOGO!
SADLY,
IS IT REALLY YOU? YOU WAITED HERE FOR ME TO RECOVER?
I AM SHOGO, BUT I AM NOT THE HUMAN SHOGO.
A SYNTHIAN?
YES. DOES THAT DISPLEASE YOU?
I WILL KEEP YOU COMPANY TONIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY.

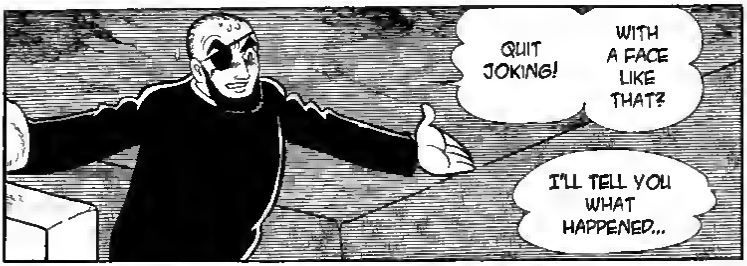
PLEASE DON YOUR CLOTHES.
STOP! DON'T TALK TO ME THAT WAY!
YOU'RE NOT MY SLAVE. DON'T BE SO FORMAL!
BUT, YOUR MAJESTY...
CALL ME "YOU."
YOU ...
JUST BE FRANK AND OPEN WITH ME. THAT'S THE SHOGO I KNOW!
LET'S GET BACK TO THE PALACE.

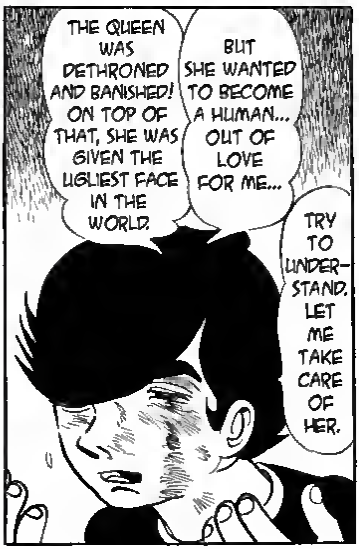
NONE OF THAT NONSENSE, QUEEN!
NONSENSE ?!

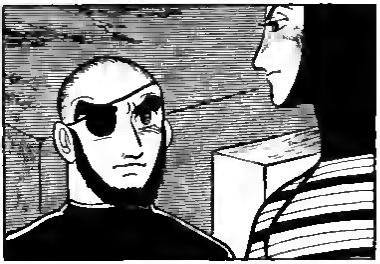

I SUPPOSE THAT WAS AN EXPRESSION OF "LOVE"?
I KNOW YOU LOVE ME! YOU SAID SO, JUST AS THEY WERE CUTTING MY HEAD OFF!
I DID? THAT'S NEWS TO ME.
TRY IT AGAIN ...
YOU'VE PIQUED MY INTEREST ...
...
NO! YOU'RE NOT SHOGO!
YOU'RE A SYNTHIAN... INCAPABLE OF EMOTION ...
I WILL PRACTICE SO THAT I MIGHT PLEASE YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.
NO! FAKING IT ISN'T ENOUGH!

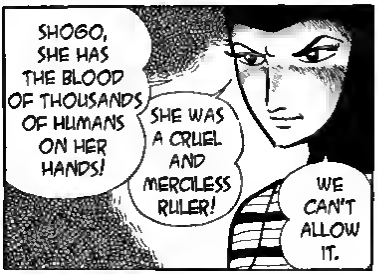

WHY, IT'S SHOGO!
YOU MADE IT BACK! BUT YOU'RE INJURED. WHAT HAPPENED?
NOTHING ... IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
BRING MEDICINE!
I'M SORRY THERE'S NO DOCTOR...
THE ROBO-POLICE DIDN'T PICK YOU UP?
THE SYNTHIAN P.M. INSISTED THAT I NOT BE EXECUTED.
WHO'S SHE?

THE WOMAN WHO SAVED MY LIFE.
PLEASE GIVE HER SHELTER HERE.
...
SHE MAY BE UGLY, BUT HER HEART IS LIKE OURS.
IS SHE A SYN-THIAN ?
SHE'S A SYNTHIAN ?
WHY'D YOU BRING HER HERE?
SO IT SEEMS.
THIS IS OUR HIDEOUT! IF SHE RATS ON US TO THE SYNTHIANS, WE'RE FINISHED!
WE NEVER REVEAL THIS PLACE, EVEN TO THE MOST SYMPATHETIC SYNTHIANS!
I KNOW! BUT SHE'S...
BUT CAPTAIN, PLEASE, HEAR ME OUT! YOU SEE, THIS WOMAN IS...
UGH!
QUEEN SIGMA?


QUIT JOKING!
WITH A FACE LIKE THAT?
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED...


THE QUEEN WAS DETHRONED AND BANISHED! ON TOP OF THAT, SHE WAS GIVEN THE UGLIEST FACE IN THE WORLD.
BUT SHE WANTED TO BECOME A HUMAN... OUT OF LOVE FOR ME...
TRY TO UNDER-STAND. LET ME TAKE CARE OF HER.

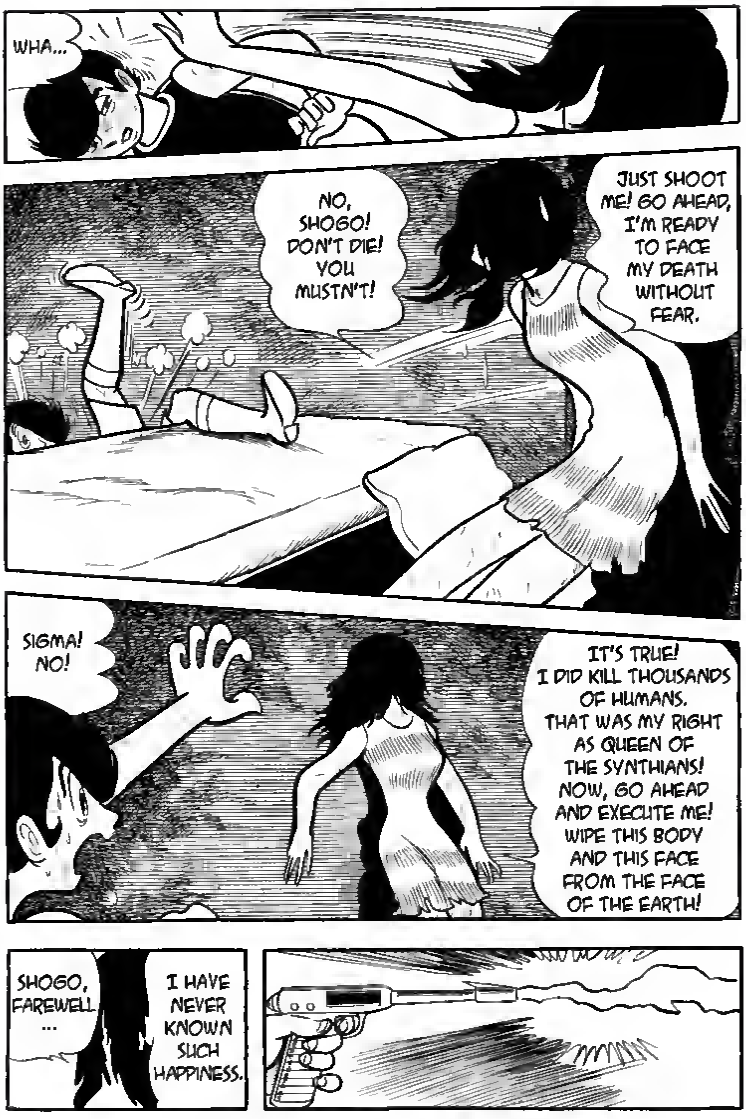


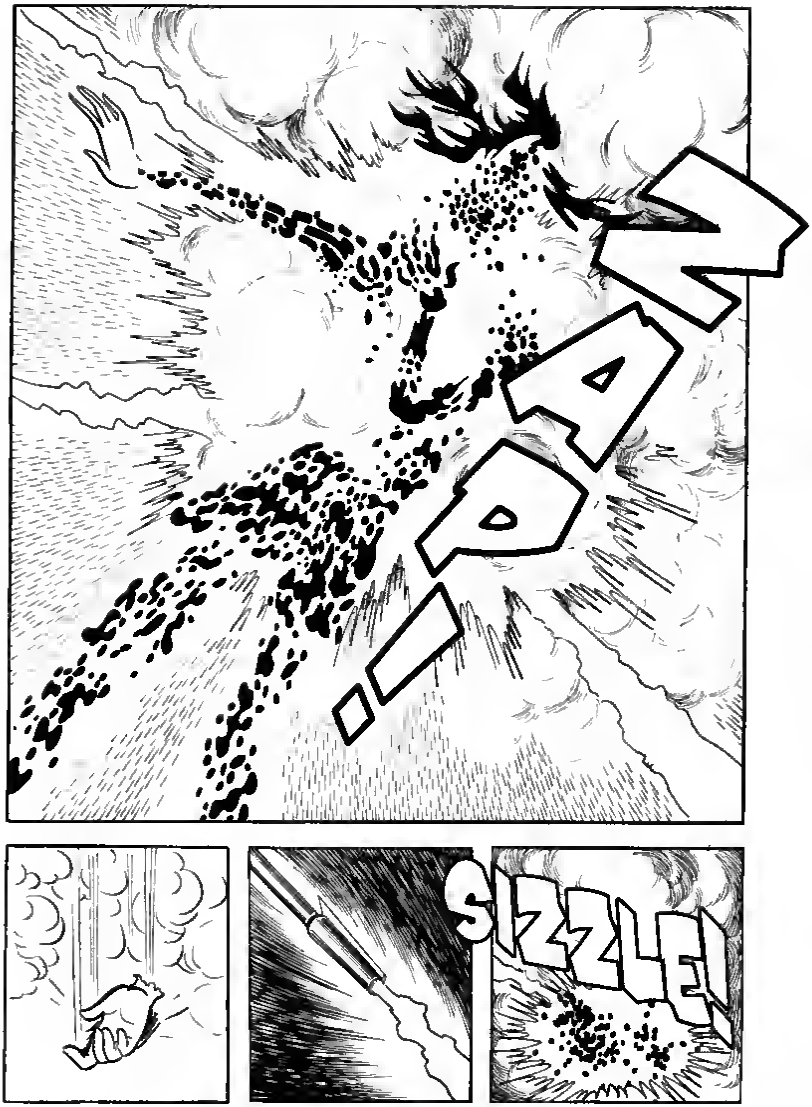

SHOGO, SHE HAS THE BLOOD OF THOUSANDS OF HUMANS ON HER HANDS!
SHE WAS A CRUEL AND MERCILESS RULER!
WE CAN'T ALLOW IT.

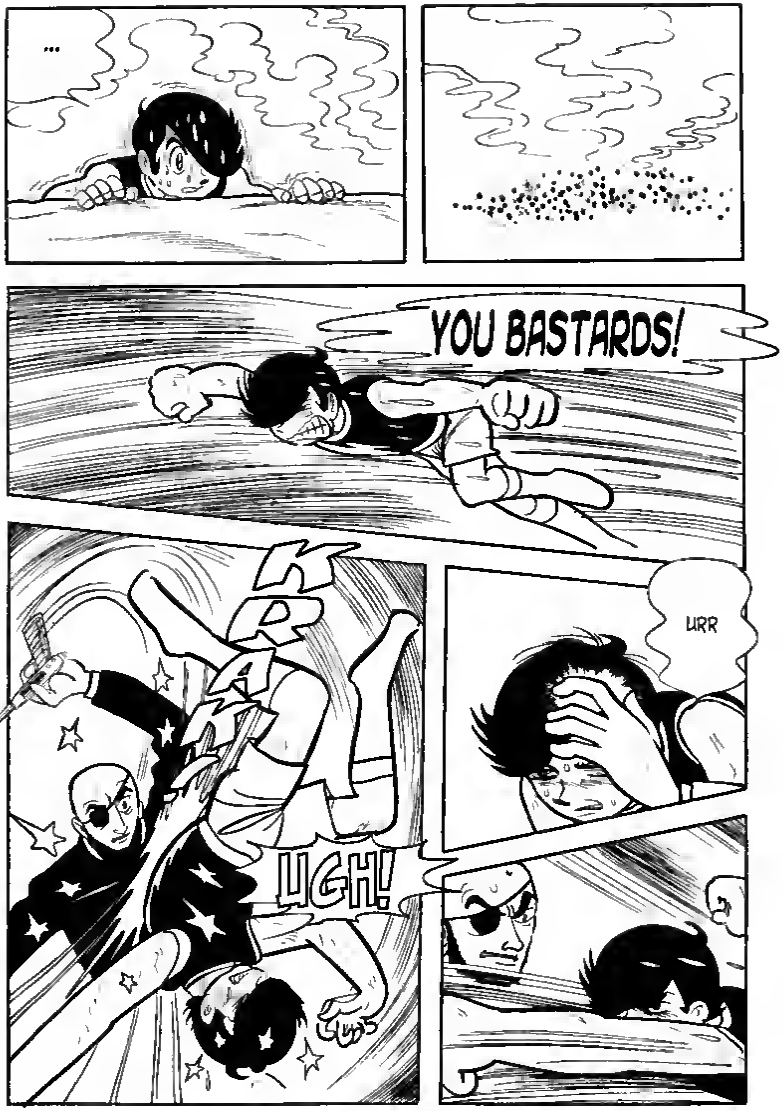
PLEASE, STOP!
IF YOU WON'T HAVE US, WE'LL LEAVE.
I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, SHOGO, BUT WE MUST KILL THE QUEEN.
MOVE OUT OF THE WAY, SHOGO!
NO!!

SHOGO, YOU'RE AN ASSASSIN CHARGED WITH KILLING THE QUEEN. WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING HER NOW?
LEAVE US ALONE! I LOVE HER! NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF WOMAN SHE IS... I'M GOING TO PROTECT HER!

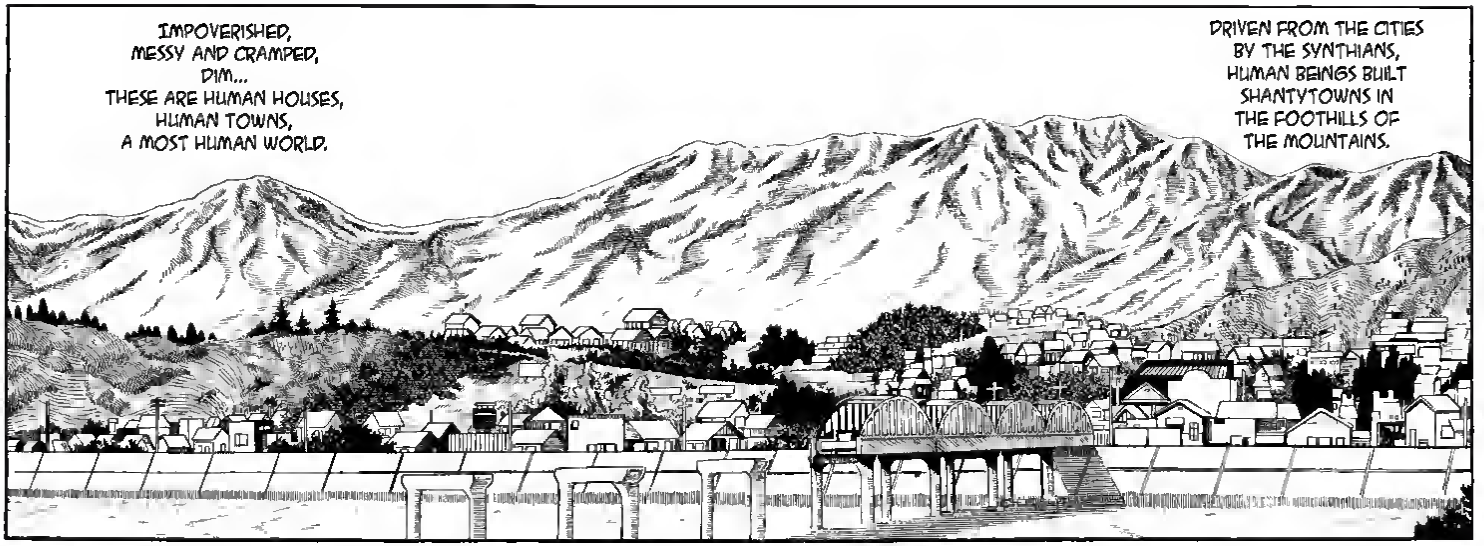
OUT OF THE WAY! I'D HATE TO HAVE TO SHOOT YOU AS A TRAITOR, SHOGO!
NONE OF YOU...
SHOOT IF YOU WANT!
THERE'S NO POINT IN TRYING TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.
HAVE EVER REALLY BEEN IN LOVE, HAVE YOU?
VERY WELL.


WHA...
NO, SHOGO! DON'T DIE! YOU MUSTN'T!
JUST SHOOT ME! GO AHEAD, I'M READY TO FACE MY DEATH WITHOUT FEAR.
SIGMA! NO!
IT'S TRUE! I DID KILL THOUSANDS OF HUMANS. THAT WAS MY RIGHT AS QUEEN OF THE SYNTHIANS! NOW, GO AHEAD AND EXECUTE ME! WIPE THIS BODY AND THIS FACE FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH!
SHOGO, FAREWELL ...
I HAVE NEVER KNOWN SUCH HAPPINESS.


BOOM
SIZZLE!


...
YOU BASTARDS!
KRAK!
UGH!
URR

WHUP
BLINDED BY LOVE! HOW STUPID CAN YOU BE?
DUNK YOUR HEAD IN COLD WATER UNTIL YOU REALIZE HOW POINTLESS IT IS TO FALL IN LOVE WITH A SYNTHIAN!
SEND HIM TO THE COUNTRY-SIDE FOR A WHILE TO CALM DOWN.
WE'LL LET HIM OFF THIS TIME. WE NEED EVERY HUMAN WE'VE GOT.
KILL ME!
WHAT'S THE RUSH?
IF YOU WANT TO DIE, DIE FIGHTING THE SYN-THIANS!
YOU'LL HAVE YOUR CHANCE.
BUT UNTIL THEN, FORGET ALL ABOUT THE QUEEN!

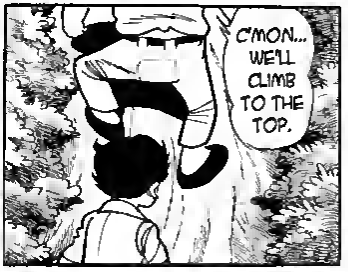

IMPOVERISHED, MESSY AND CRAMPED, DIM... THESE ARE HUMAN HOUSES, HUMAN TOWNS, A MOST HUMAN WORLD.
DRIVEN FROM THE CITIES BY THE SYNTHIANS, HUMAN BEINGS BUILT SHANTYTOWNS IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE MOUNTAINS.

HEHEHEH... WELL? ARE YOU FEELING HUMAN AGAIN?

THE TEA ON RICE IS GOOD, ISN'T IT?
AND HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM RADISH PICKLES?
MUNCH
MUNCH

BEAUTIFUL, AIN'T IT? THIS IS THE HUMAN WORLD! HUMANS KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT HARMONY WITH NATURE, WITH THE EARTH.
LOOK AT THEM GREEN HILLS!

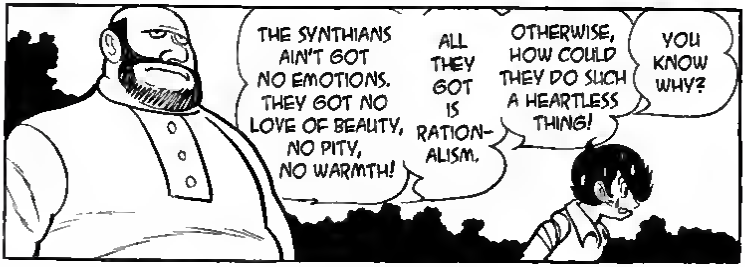
I WANNA SHOW YOU SOMETHIN'. COME ON!


C'MON... WE'LL CLIMB TO THE TOP.

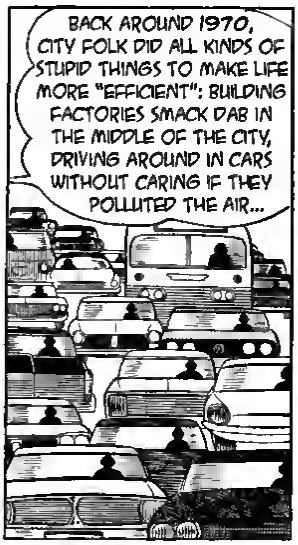
EVERY-THING BEYOND HERE...

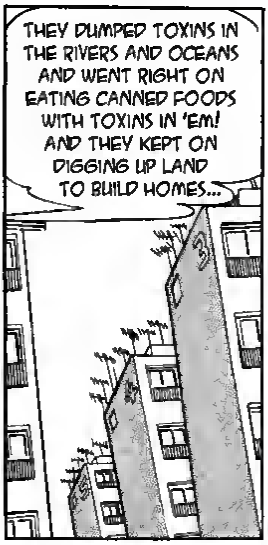
IS THE SYNTHIAN WORLD.
TAKE A GOOD LOOK!
THEY CUT THE MOUNTAIN CLEAR IN HALF
AND WIPED OUT EVERY LAST TREE,
BLADE OF GRASS, AND BUG!
NO CHARM, NO WARMTH!
LOOK AT THEIR HOMES!

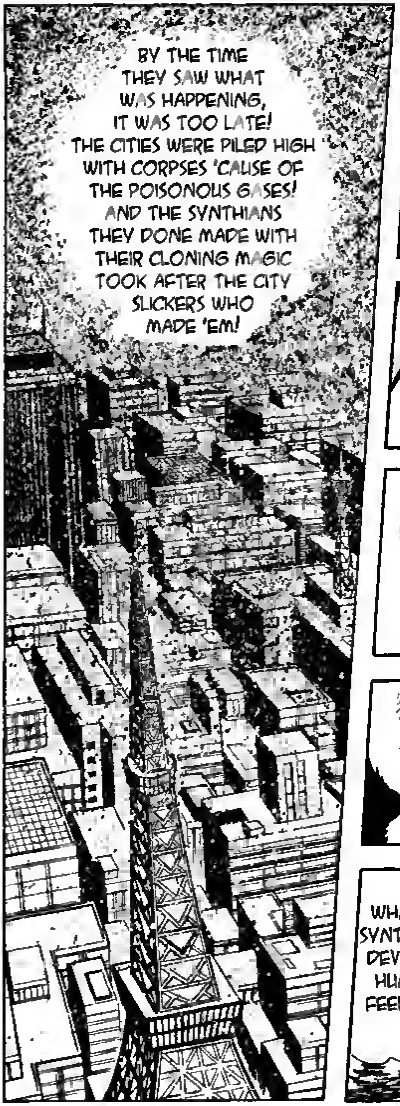
THAT USED TO BE MT. FUJI. NOW IT'S A SPACE CENTER.

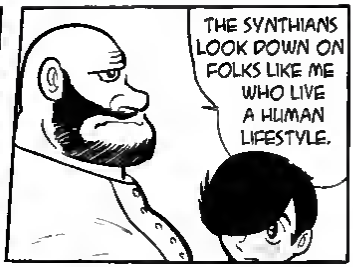

THE SYNTHIANS AIN'T GOT NO EMOTIONS. THEY GOT NO LOVE OF BEAUTY, NO PITY, NO WARMTH!
ALL THEY GOT IS RATION-ALISM.
OTHERWISE, HOW COULD THEY DO SUCH A HEARTLESS THING!
YOU KNOW WHY?

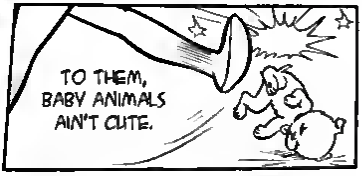
THEY WERE MODELED AFTER CITY FOLK!

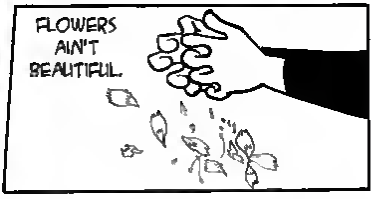

BACK AROUND 1970, CITY FOLK DID ALL KINDS OF STUPID THINGS TO MAKE LIFE MORE "EFFICIENT": BUILDING FACTORIES SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY, DRIVING AROUND IN CARS WITHOUT CARING IF THEY POLLUTED THE AIR...

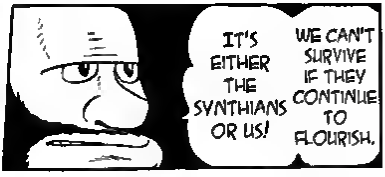

THEY DUMPED TOXINS IN THE RIVERS AND OCEANS AND WENT RIGHT ON EATING CANNED FOODS WITH TOXINS IN 'EM! AND THEY KEPT ON DIGGING UP LAND TO BUILD HOMES...


BY THE TIME THEY SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, IT WAS TOO LATE! THE CITIES WERE PILED HIGH WITH CORPSES 'CAUSE OF THE POISONOUS GASES! AND THE SYNTHIANS THEY DONE MADE WITH THEIR CLONING MAGIC TOOK AFTER THE CITY SLICKERS WHO MADE 'EM!


THE SYNTHIANS LOOK DOWN ON FOLKS LIKE ME WHO LIVE A HUMAN LIFESTYLE.


TO THEM, BABY ANIMALS AIN'T CUTE.

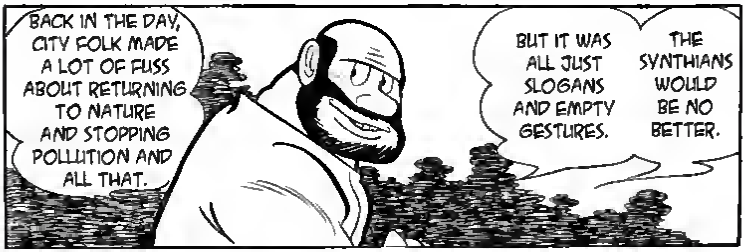

FLOWERS AIN'T BEAUTIFUL.


IT'S EITHER THE SYNTHIANS OR US!
WE CAN'T SURVIVE IF THEY CONTINUE TO FLOURISH.

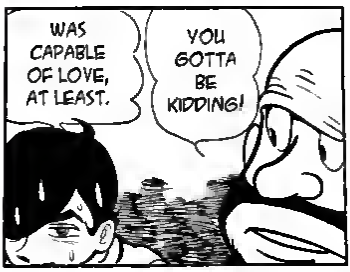
WHAT IF SYNTHIANS DEVELOP HUMAN FEELINGS ?

THAT'LL NEVER HAPPEN.
WHAT IF THE SYNTHIANS LEARN TO LOVE?
NEVER!
SYNTHIANS ?!
I KNOW... OF A SYNTHIAN WOMAN...
WHO WANTED A HUMAN HEART... SHE WANTED TO KNOW LOVE... AND SHE SUFFERED FOR IT.
EVENTUALLY, SHE DID FIND LOVE.
AFTER ALL, SYNTHIANS ARE ORGANISMS, TOO. THEY MAY BE HEARTLESS, BUT THEY'RE ALIVE.
ONE DAY, EVEN THE SYNTHIANS WILL SPROUT THE SEEDS OF HUMAN FEELING.

WON'T THEY?
THEY MIGHT PRETEND TO.


BACK IN THE DAY, CITY FOLK MADE A LOT OF FUSS ABOUT RETURNING TO NATURE AND STOPPING POLLUTION AND ALL THAT.
BUT IT WAS ALL JUST SLOGANS AND EMPTY GESTURES.
THE SYNTHIANS WOULD BE NO BETTER.

YOU'RE WRONG. I BELIEVE IN THE SYNTHIANS.
QUEEN SIGMA ...


WAS CAPABLE OF LOVE, AT LEAST.
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!

SHE GAVE ANOTHER ORDER BANISHING HUMANS JUST YESTERDAY !

YESTERDAY?

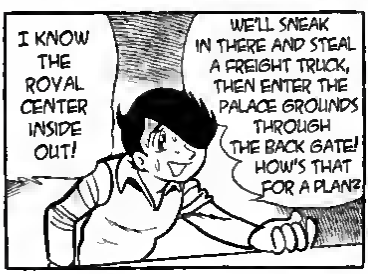
BUT THE QUEEN IS DEAD!
WAS SHE REBORN AGAIN?
OH, RIGHT!
HER HEAD!
THEY MADE ANOTHER QUEEN FROM HER HEAD!

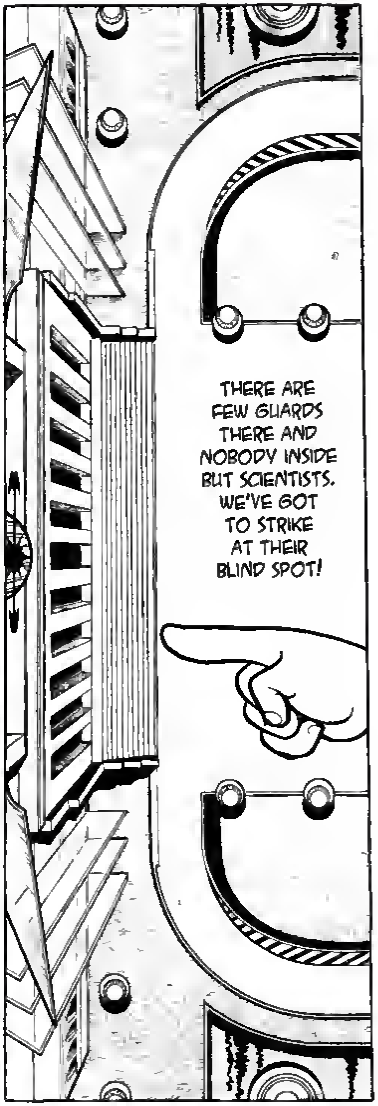
I KNOW THE QUEEN WILL SEE ME!
VROOM
WHAT? DON'T BE AN IDIOT! HUMANS ARE BANNED IN TOKYO!
HEY! WHERE YA GOING?
TO TOKYO!

SHOGO? WHAT BRINGS YOU BACK ALL OF A SUDDEN?

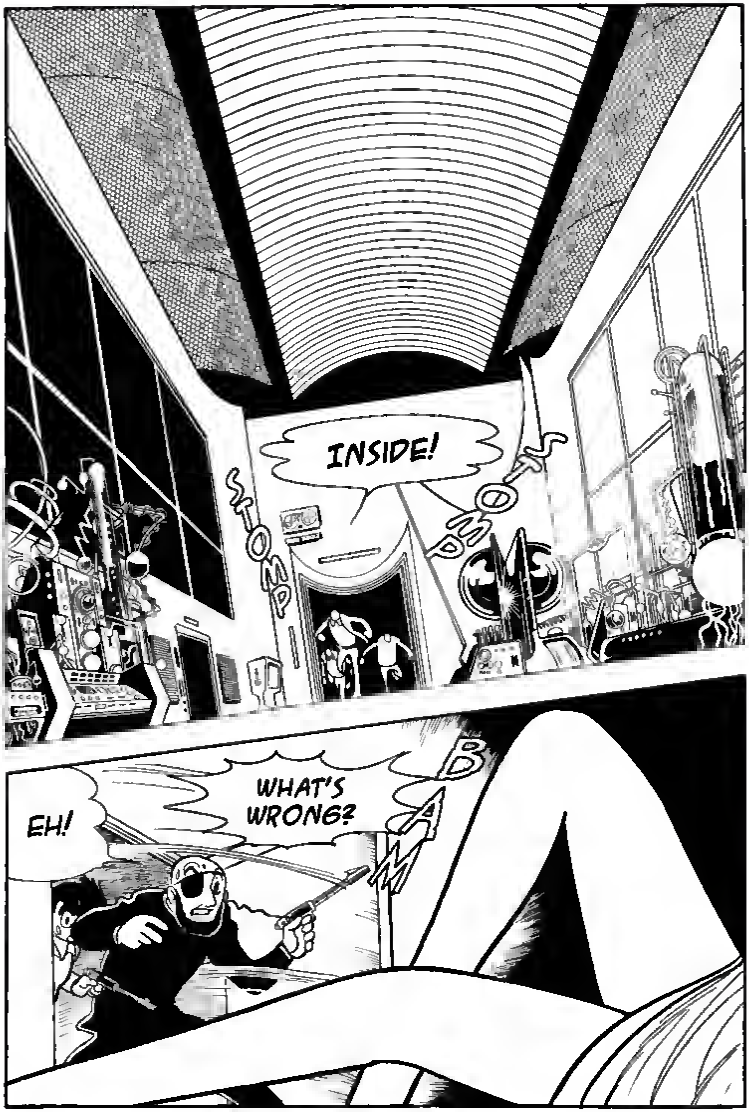
IT'S DO OR DIE, SHOGO! WE ATTACK THE PALACE TODAY!

TAKE ME WITH YOU!
WE CAN'T. THEY KNOW YOUR FACE.


I KNOW THE ROYAL CENTER INSIDE OUT!
WE'LL SNEAK IN THERE AND STEAL A FREIGHT TRUCK, THEN ENTER THE PALACE GROUNDS THROUGH THE BACK GATE! HOW'S THAT FOR A PLAN?


THERE ARE FEW GUARDS THERE AND NOBODY INSIDE BUT SCIENTISTS. WE'VE GOT TO STRIKE AT THEIR BLIND SPOT!

SEE? WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE CHANGING GUARDS... LET'S GO!


INSIDE!
STOMP
BOOM
EH!
WHAT'S WRONG?
B
A

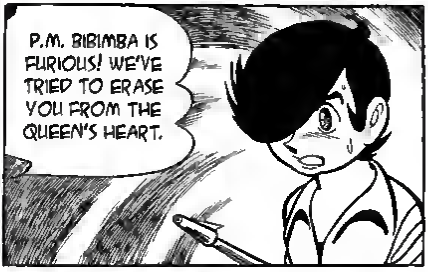
WHOA!

THESE ARE ALL THE QUEEN'S BODY! SOME OF THEM AREN'T EVEN FINISHED YET.
ALL RIGHT, YOU! WHAT ON EARTH'S GOING ON HERE? TELL US!

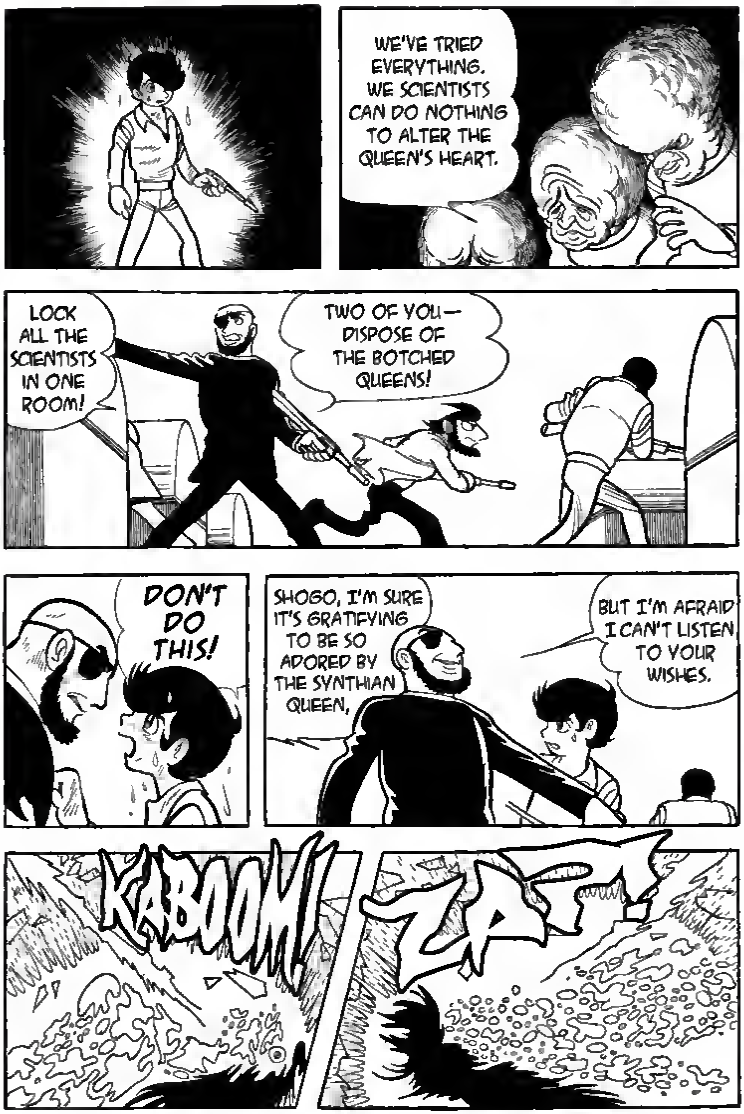
P.M. BIBIMBA ORDERED US TO REGENERATE THE QUEEN FROM A PIECE OF HER BODY.
OVER AND OVER! WE'VE REMADE THE QUEEN... OH...FIFTY TIMES OR SO!!
BUT EVERY TIME WE HAD TO REDO IT.
FOR SOME REASON...

ALL OF THE QUEENS WE'VE MANAGED TO GROW

KEEP CALLING YOUR NAME. WE CAN'T WIPE AWAY HER AFFECTION FOR YOU!


P.M. BIBIMBA IS FURIOUS! WE'VE TRIED TO ERASE YOU FROM THE QUEEN'S HEART.

BUT NO MATTER HOW MANY OF HER WE MAKE, IT'S NO GOOD!!

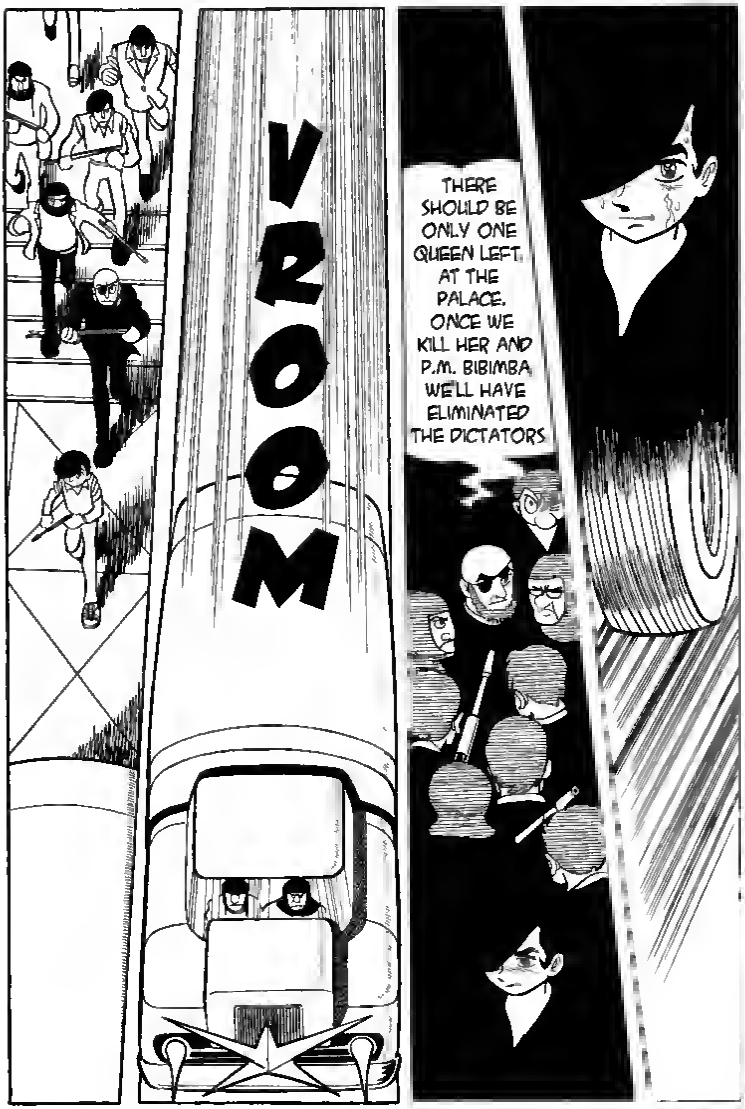

WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING. WE SCIENTISTS CAN DO NOTHING TO ALTER THE QUEEN'S HEART.
LOCK ALL THE SCIENTISTS IN ONE ROOM!
TWO OF YOU— DISPOSE OF THE BOTCHED QUEENS!
DON'T DO THIS!
SHOGO, I'M SURE IT'S GRATIFYING TO BE SO ADORED BY THE SYNTHIAN QUEEN,
BUT I'M AFRAID I CAN'T LISTEN TO YOUR WISHES.
KABOOM!
ZAP!

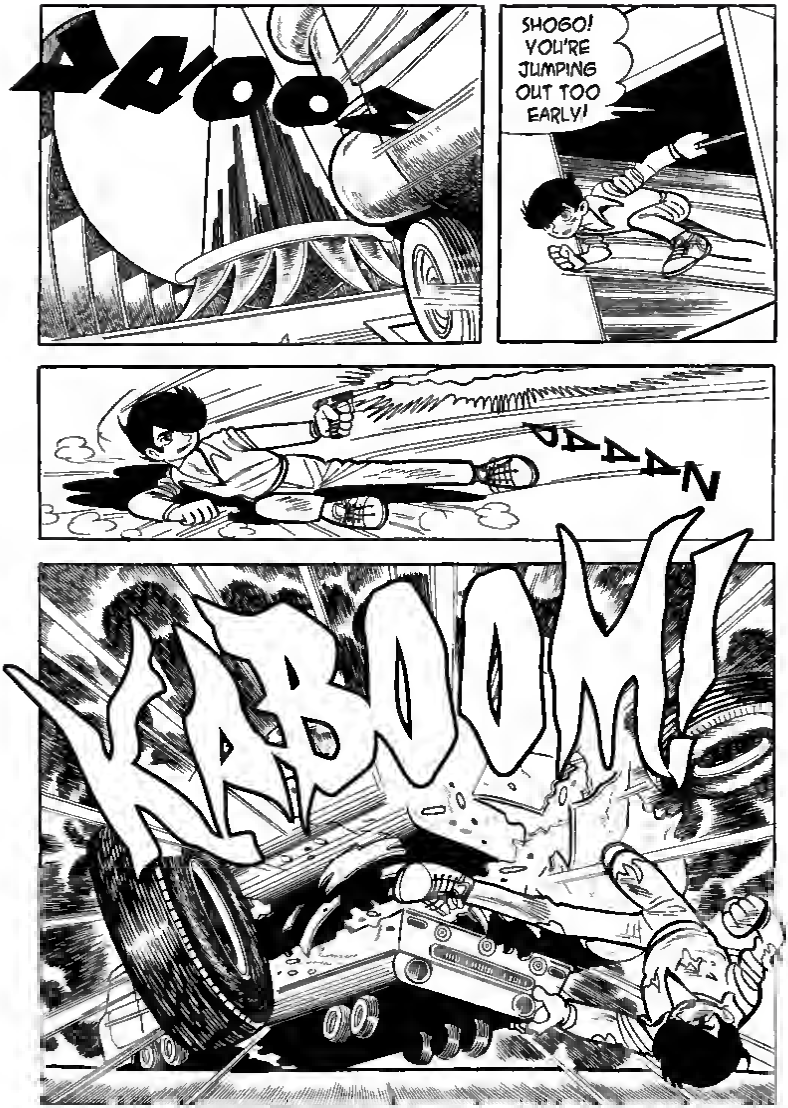
AH !!
SHOGO !!
WZAM
SPLAT
WZAM
UGH !
SHOGO !!

FINALLY!! I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
SQUISH
QUEEN!!
SHOGO ...

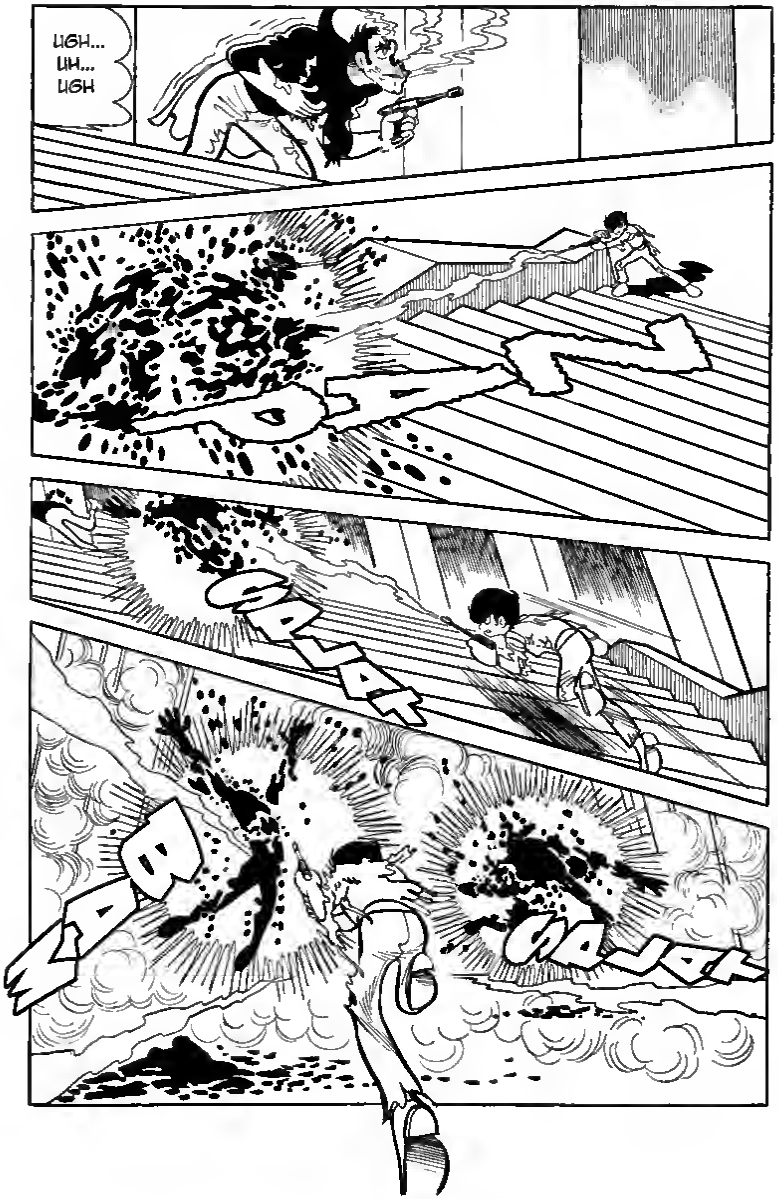
STOP! PLEASE, STOP! I... I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

SHOGO! DON'T JUST SIT THERE!
HURRY AND SHOW US TO THE FREIGHT TRUCK!


VROOM
THERE SHOULD BE ONLY ONE QUEEN LEFT AT THE PALACE. ONCE WE KILL HER AND P.M. BIBIMBA, WE'LL HAVE ELIMINATED THE DICTATORS


ABOO
SHOGO! YOU'RE JUMPING OUT TOO EARLY!
DAAAN
KABOOM!

WHAT IS THIS?
TAKE THAT, YOU DIRTY ASS!
BANG!

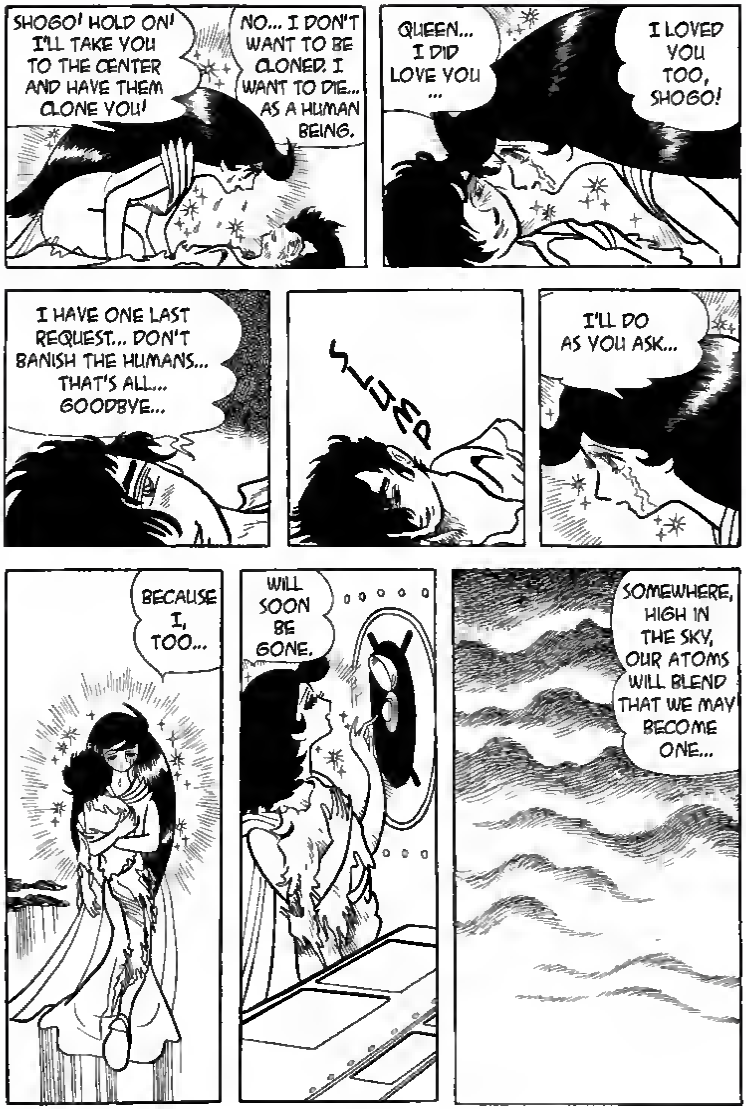

UGH...
UH...
UGH
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH

AHEM

SHOGO! IT'S REALLY YOU, ISN'T IT!

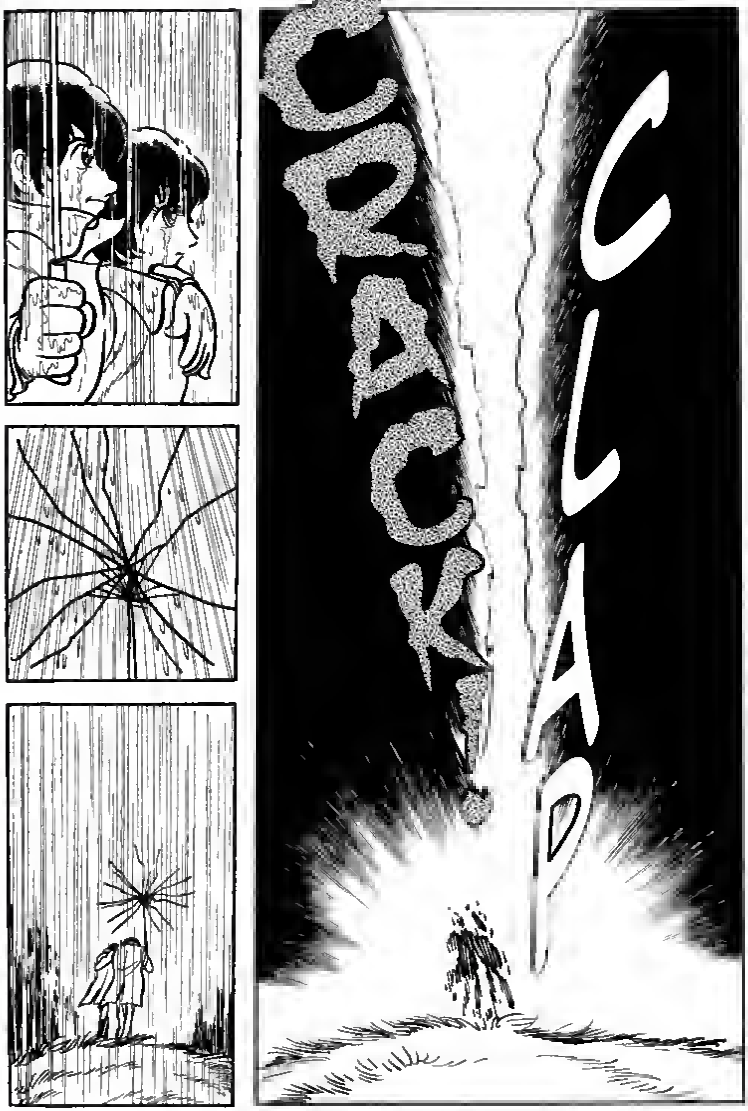
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS DAY! I KNEW YOU'D COME BACK! I KNEW IT!
NOBODY CAN COME BETWEEN US NOW! THE P.M. AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS ARE ALL DEAD! YOU AND I CAN GO WHEREVER WE WANT!
AH!
BABABABABABABA

YOU'RE MY... CLONE... YOU WERE STILL ALIVE?
ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH THE QUEEN, TOO?
DON'T BE ABSURD! I'M NOT LIKE YOU HUMANS!
BUT YOU HAVE... THE SAME HEART... THAT I DO. WHY...
I SEE... YOU WERE CREATED... BEFORE I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE QUEEN!
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD AND THAT'S ALL!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?! THAT WAS THE REAL SHOGO!
BUT QUEEN! HE'S A HUMAN!
ZAP
I HAVE NO USE FOR YOU !!

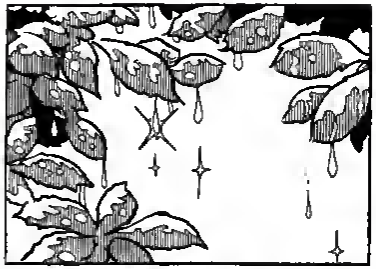

SHOGO! HOLD ON! I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE CENTER AND HAVE THEM CLONE YOU!
NO... I DON'T WANT TO BE CLONED. I WANT TO DIE... AS A HUMAN BEING.
QUEEN... I DID LOVE YOU ...
I LOVED YOU TOO, SHOGO!
I HAVE ONE LAST REQUEST... DON'T BANISH THE HUMANS... THAT'S ALL... GOODBYE...
SLUMP
I'LL DO AS YOU ASK...
BECAUSE I, TOO...
WILL SOON BE GONE.
SOMEWHERE, HIGH IN THE SKY, OUR ATOMS WILL BLEND THAT WE MAY BECOME ONE...

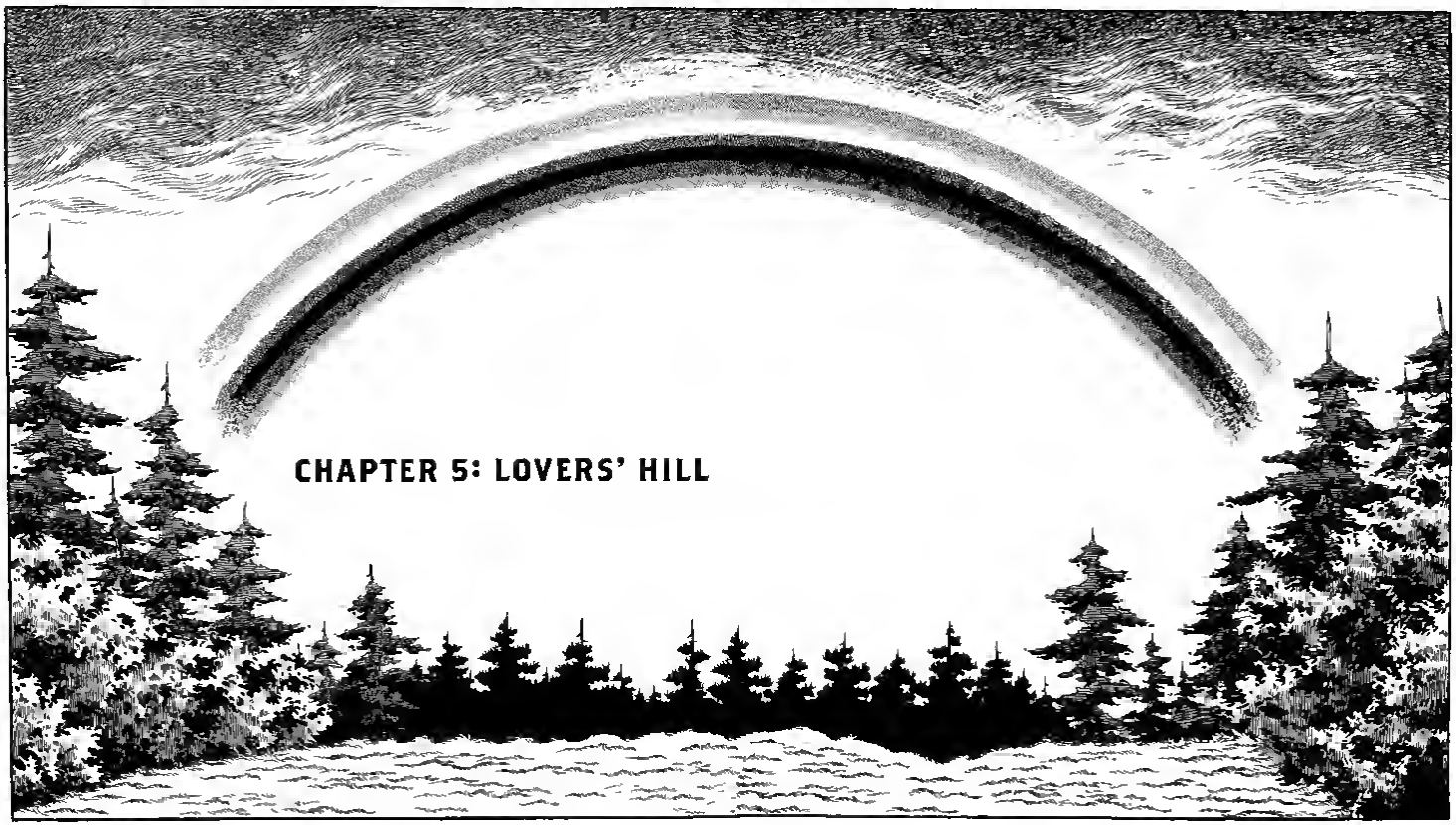
SHHHHH
SHHHHH
SHHHHH

FLASH
ドドドド
ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ

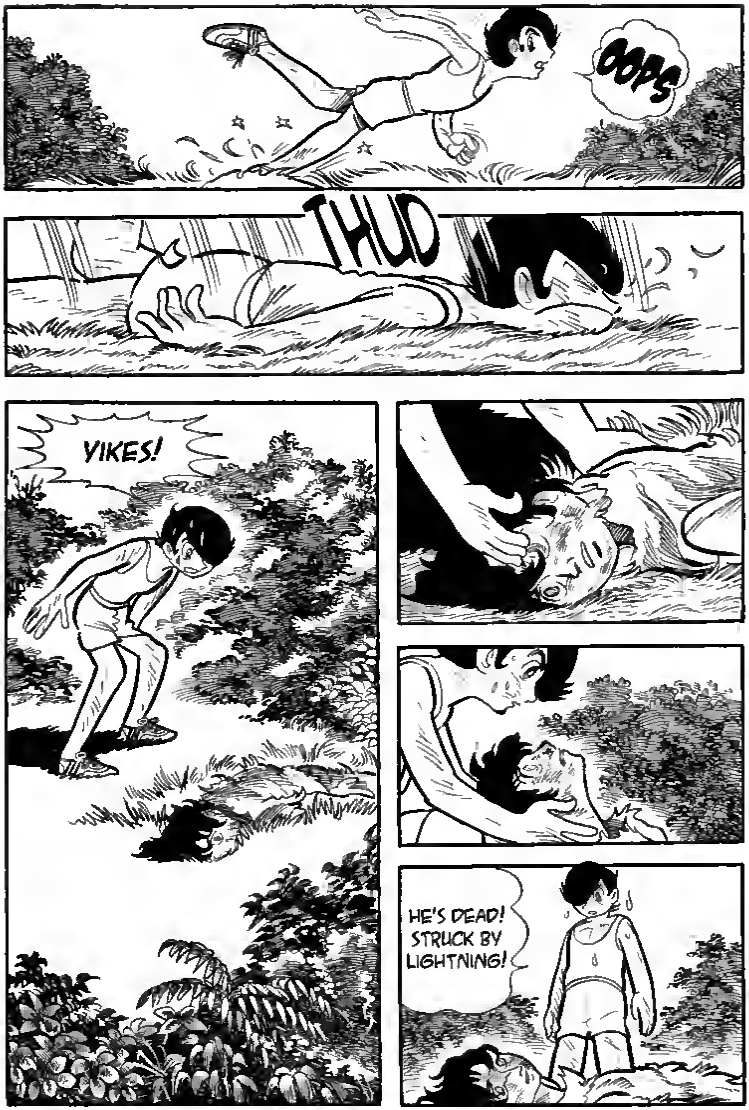

CRACK!
CLAD

SHHH
SHHH



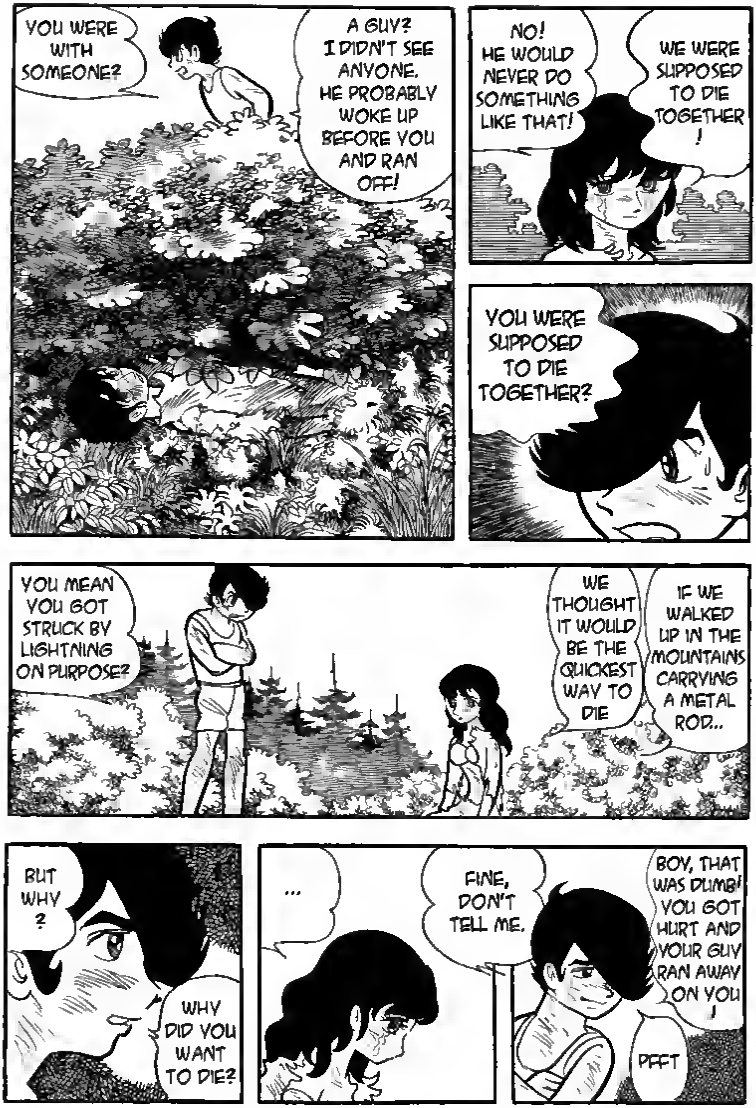

CHAPTER 5: LOVERS' HILL

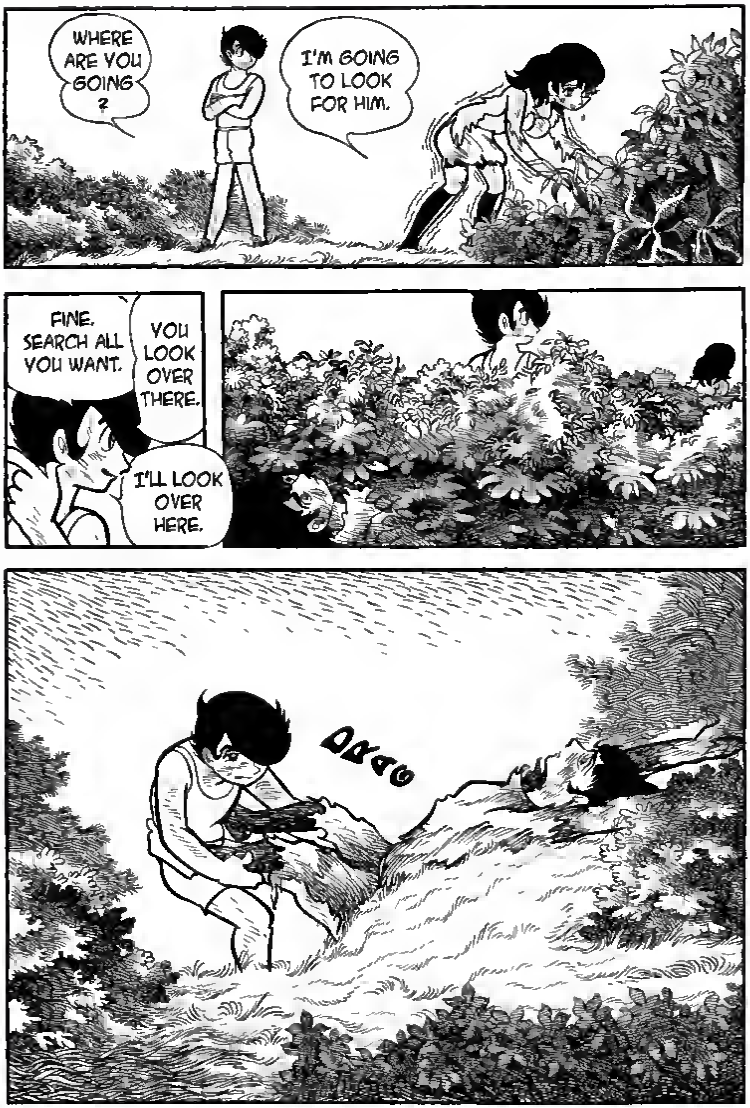
FITCH
FITCH
FITCH
FITCH

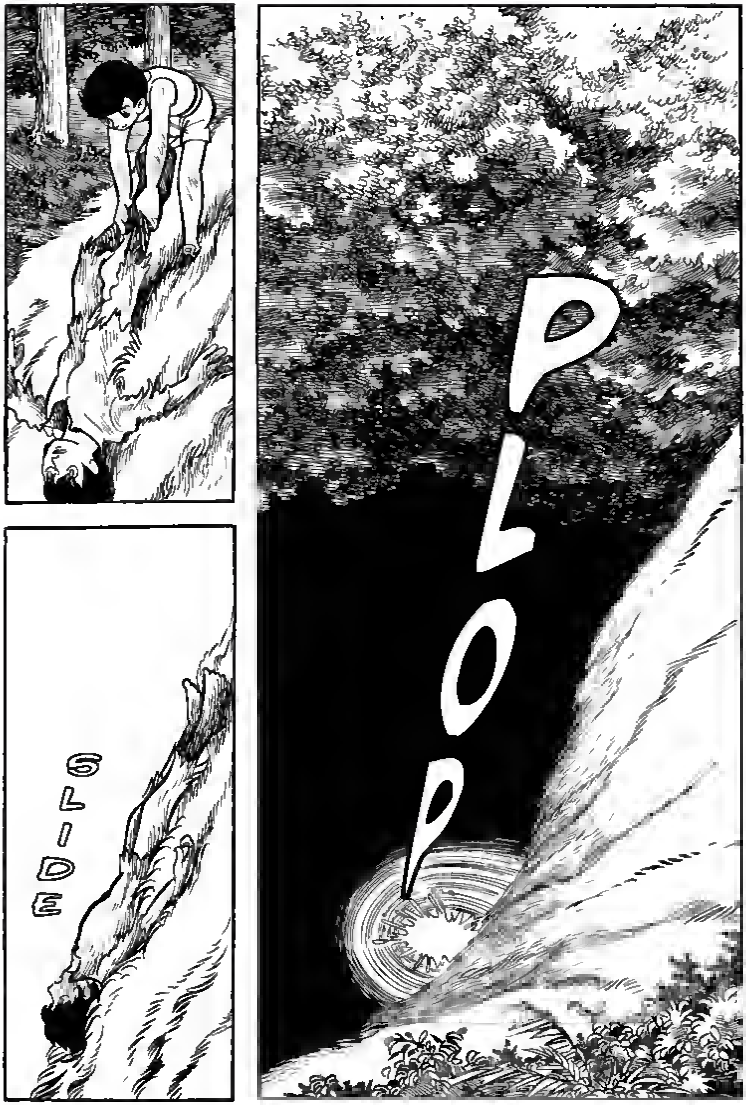

OOPS
THUD
YIKES!
HE'S DEAD! STRUCK BY LIGHTNING!

THERE'S ANOTHER! A WOMAN!
STRUCK BY A LIGHTNING BOLT!
HER HEART IS STILL BEATING!
SLAP
SLAP
HEY THERE! HOW'RE YOU FEELING, CUTIE?
HERE, GET UP! YOU SURVIVED. WHAT LUCK!

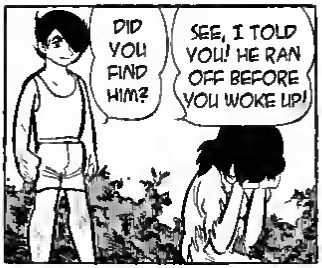
...
I WAS RUNNING AND I FOUND YOU LYING ON THE GROUND. I'M TRAINING TO BE A MARATHON RUNNER— MY NAME'S SHOGO.
WHY ARE YOU STILL SPACED OUT? SNAP OUT OF IT!
WHERE IS HE?
WHERE'S WHO?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DIDN'T SEE HIM? HERE... WITH ME?
YOU WERE ALONE.
SHUT UP!
YOU'RE HIDING HIM, AREN'T YOU! IS HE ALIVE OR DEAD? TELL ME!
I SAID YOU WERE ALONE, SO YOU WERE ALONE.


YOU WERE WITH SOMEONE?
A GUY? I DIDN'T SEE ANYONE. HE PROBABLY WOKE UP BEFORE YOU AND RAN OFF!
NO! HE WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE TOGETHER!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE TOGETHER?
YOU MEAN YOU GOT STRUCK BY LIGHTNING ON PURPOSE?
WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THE QUICKEST WAY TO DIE
IF WE WALKED UP IN THE MOUNTAINS CARRYING A METAL ROD...
BUT WHY?
WHY DID YOU WANT TO DIE?
...
FINE, DON'T TELL ME.
BOY, THAT WAS DUMB! YOU GOT HURT AND YOUR GUY RAN AWAY ON YOU!
PFFT


WHERE ARE YOU GOING ?
I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR HIM.
FINE. SEARCH ALL YOU WANT.
YOU LOOK OVER THERE.
I'LL LOOK OVER HERE.
DASH


PLOP
SLIDE

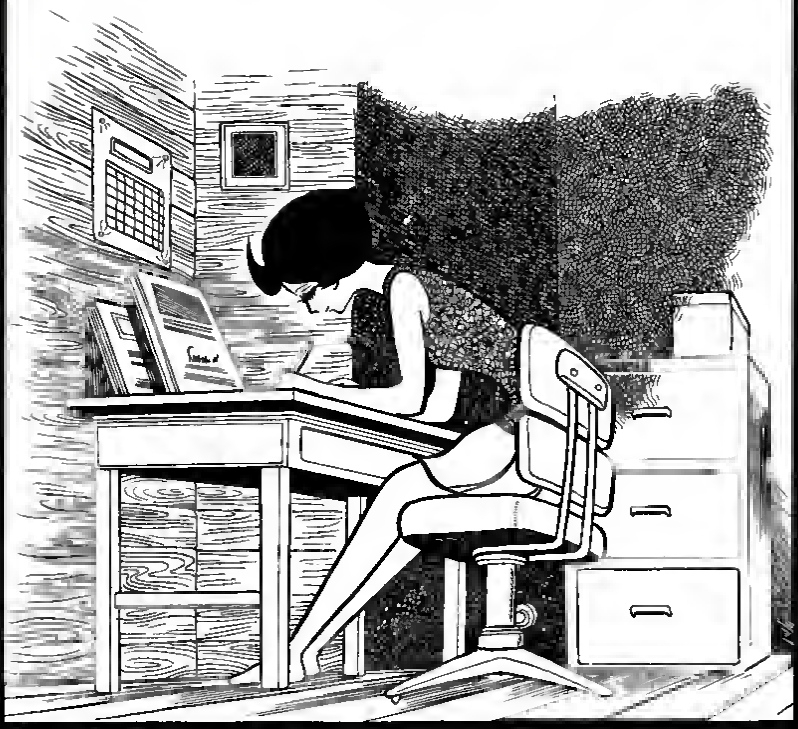
RUSTLE


DID YOU FIND HIM?
SEE, I TOLD YOU! HE RAN OFF BEFORE YOU WOKE UP!

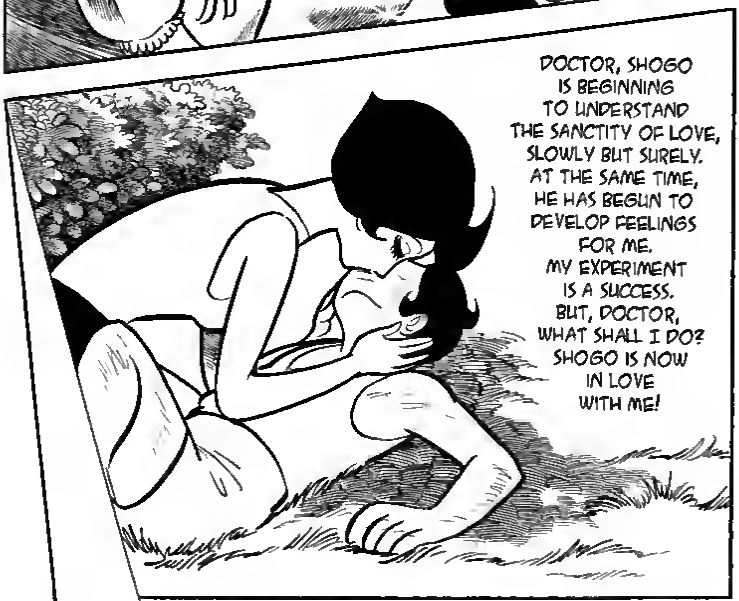
LET'S GO TO THE CABIN. YOU CAN HAVE A REST THERE.

DEAR DOCTOR,
THIS IS YOUR STUDENT, HIROMI WATARI.
I AM NOW LIVING IN A MOUNTAIN CABIN DEEP IN HAKONE
WITH A PATIENT NAMED SHOGO CHIKAISHI.
YOU KNOW HIM WELL, DON'T YOU, DOCTOR?
THAT'S RIGHT, THE SAME PATIENT WHO WAS IN YOUR CARE
BEFORE HE ESCAPED FROM THE HOSPITAL.

DOCTOR, I'VE BEEN WATCHING OVER SHOGO FOR
SOME TIME NOW. MY OBJECTIVE WAS TO DETERMINE
THE ROOT OF HIS PERSONALITY ISSUES,
HIS AVERSION TO LOVE, AND TO ATTEMPT METHODS
OF TREATING HIM. KNOWING HOW TENACIOUS
HE IS AND HOW STRONG HIS LEGS ARE,
I HAVE BEEN TRAINING HIM AS A MARATHON RUNNER.
AT FIRST, HE WAS EXTREMELY DISTRUSTFUL,
BUT HE HAS COME TO LISTEN TO EVERYTHING I SAY.



SHOGO'S TERRIBLE CRUELTY IS ROOTED IN A COMPLEX HE DEVELOPED AS A CHILD. FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE, WHENEVER HE WITNESSED LOVE AND TENDERNESS, HE WAS SUBJECTED TO THE TERROR OF BEING SEVERELY BEATEN BY HIS MOTHER.
THAT FEAR DEVELOPED INTO HATRED, AND A LOATHING OF LOVE ITSELF.
I HAVE BEEN TREATING SHOGO WITH GREAT CARE. WHEN HE ASKED ME FOR A KISS, I WILLINGLY COMPLIED.


DOCTOR, SHOGO IS BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE SANCTITY OF LOVE, SLOWLY BUT SURELY. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAS BEGUN TO DEVELOP FEELINGS FOR ME. MY EXPERIMENT IS A SUCCESS. BUT, DOCTOR, WHAT SHALL I DO? SHOGO IS NOW IN LOVE WITH ME!

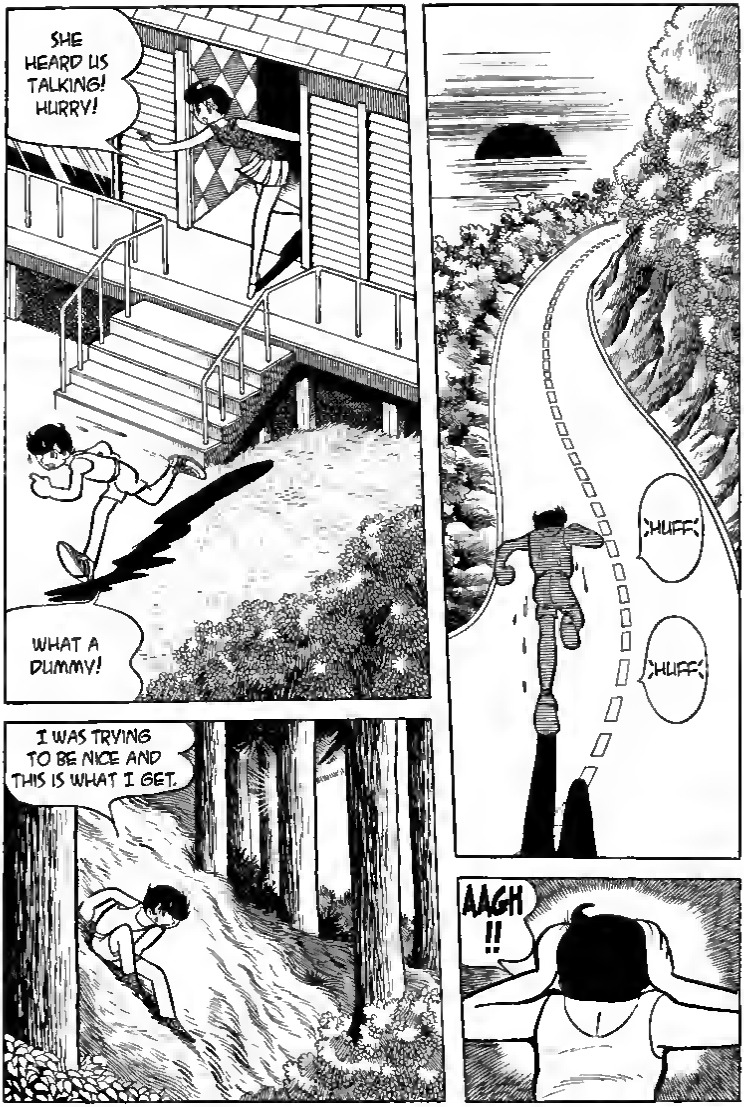
SHOGO IS COMPLETELY UNAWARE THAT THIS IS AN EXPERIMENT... HIS FEELINGS ARE GENUINE. HE LOVES ME FROM THE HEART! DOCTOR, WHAT DOES A PHYSICIAN DO WHEN A PATIENT FALLS IN LOVE WITH HER? IF SHOGO DISCOVERS THE TRUTH, HIS HEART WILL BE BROKEN AGAIN. DOCTOR, PLEASE ADVISE ME...
...
OH
HEY! HIROMI!

HIROMI!
WE HAVE A CASE!
A DOUBLE SUICIDE. BUT SHE'S ALIVE.
WHAT?
AND THE MAN?
I DIDN'T SEE HIM.
DON'T WORRY. YOU NEED A GOOD REST.
SHOGO, LEAVE US ALONE, PLEASE.
WHY? I WANT TO HEAR, TOO!
THEY COULD HAVE DONE IT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.
I'M GONNA UNDRESS HER AND TREAT HER WOUNDS!
GOT IT?

I SEE. THEN WHAT?
HIS FAMILY'S VERY WEALTHY, AND MINE'S NOT... SO HIS PARENTS REFUSED TO GIVE US THEIR BLESSING.
BUT WE WERE IN LOVE! DEEPLY IN LOVE!
I SEE.
SO WE DECIDED TO DEFY HIS PARENTS AND MARRY ANYHOW
BUT HE WAS INVOLVED IN THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A WARRANT FOR HIS ARREST.
IF THEY CAUGHT HIM, WE'D BE SEPARATED FOREVER
BUT THERE WAS NOWHERE FOR US TO RUN!
SO THE TWO OF YOU DECIDED TO DIE TOGETHER...
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WOKE UP AND RAN AWAY!
HE PROBABLY WENT DOWN THE MOUNTAIN
TO GET HELP!
YOU NEEDN'T WORRY!
IT'S LATE. WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME SLEEP AND LOOK FOR HIM IN THE MORNING?

WHY WOULD HE DISAPPEAR?
UNLESS ...
UNLESS!
NO!
SHOGO, TELL ME THE TRUTH!
HE WAS LYING NEAR THE GIRL, ALREADY DEAD.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?
HMPH!
I DIDN'T WANT HER TO DESPAIR, SO I HID HIM FROM HER.
WHERE?!
IN THE POND.

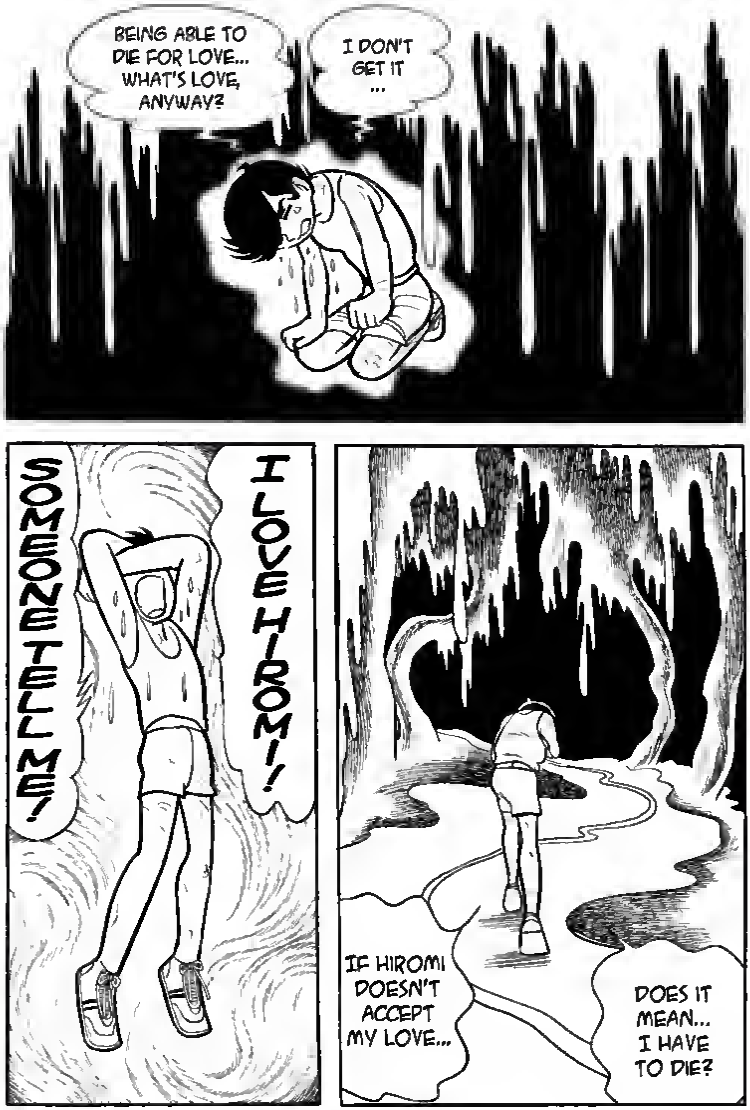
SLAP
SLAP
SMACK
SMACK
SMACK
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
HEY!
SHE'S GONE! SHE LEFT!


SHE HEARD US TALKING! HURRY!
WHAT A DUMMY!
;HUFF;
;HUFF;
I WAS TRYING TO BE NICE AND THIS IS WHAT I GET.
AAGH !!

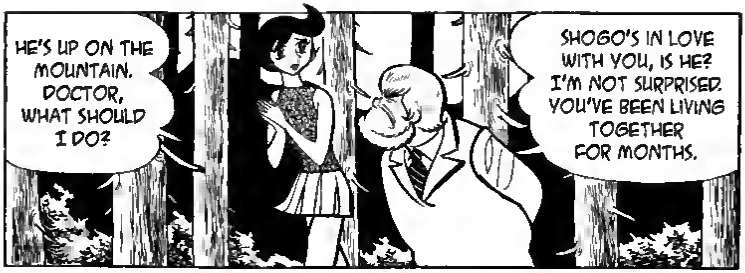
NO!!
SLIDE

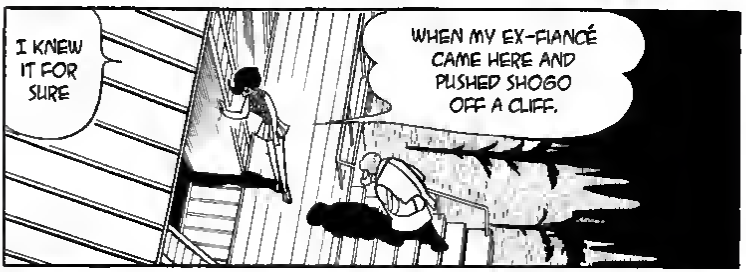
YOU STUPID... STUPID...IDIOT! WHY DID YOU GO AND DIE! AFTER I SAVED YOU AND EVERYTHING !
DID DYING REALLY MEAN SO MUCH TO YOU?
I'LL CALL THE POLICE STATION AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN.
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW.

A SUICIDE PACT... WHAT A JOKE! WHAT DID THEY GAIN BY DYING TOGETHER? NOTHING BUT DEFEAT!
WHY COULDN'T SHE FIND THE WILL TO LIVE AGAIN?! STUPID!


BEING ABLE TO DIE FOR LOVE... WHAT'S LOVE, ANYWAY?
I DON'T GET IT ...
I LOVE HIROMI!
SOMEONE TELL ME!
IF HIROMI DOESN'T ACCEPT MY LOVE...
DOES IT MEAN... I HAVE TO DIE?

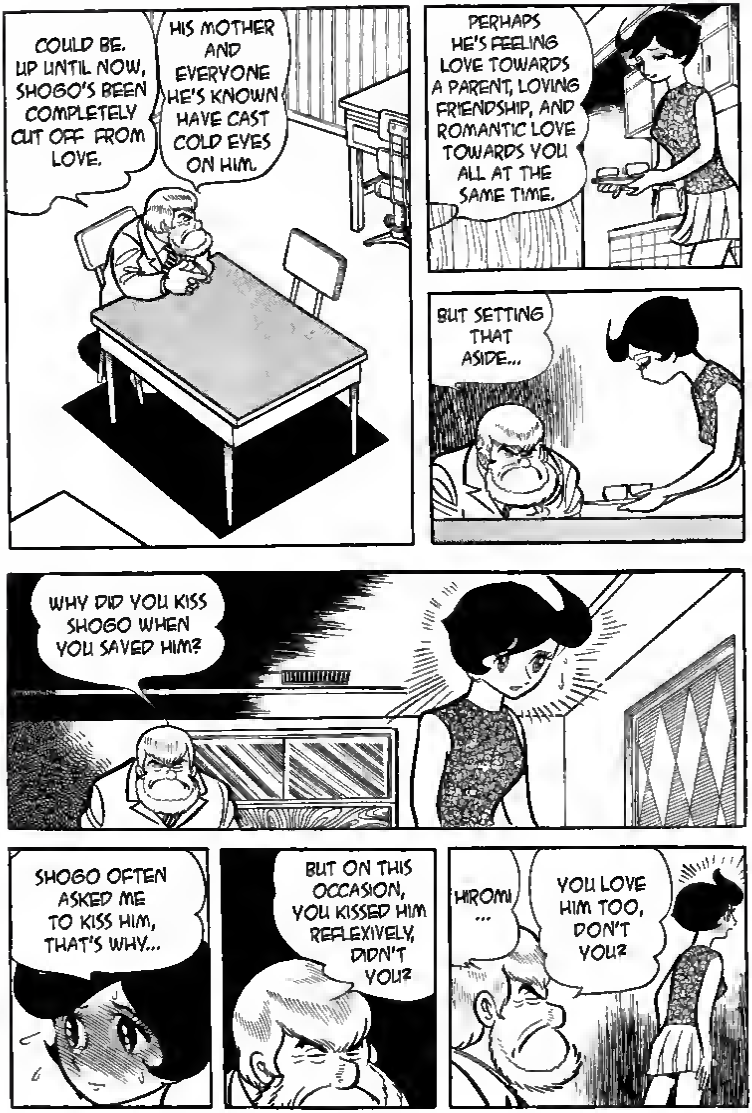
DR. ENOKI!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME HERE!
THERE'S BEEN A BIT OF AN INCIDENT...
WHERE'S SHOGO?


HE'S UP ON THE MOUNTAIN. DOCTOR, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
SHOGO'S IN LOVE WITH YOU, IS HE? I'M NOT SURPRISED. YOU'VE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR MONTHS.


I KNEW IT FOR SURE
WHEN MY EX-FIANCÉ CAME HERE AND PUSHED SHOGO OFF A CLIFF.

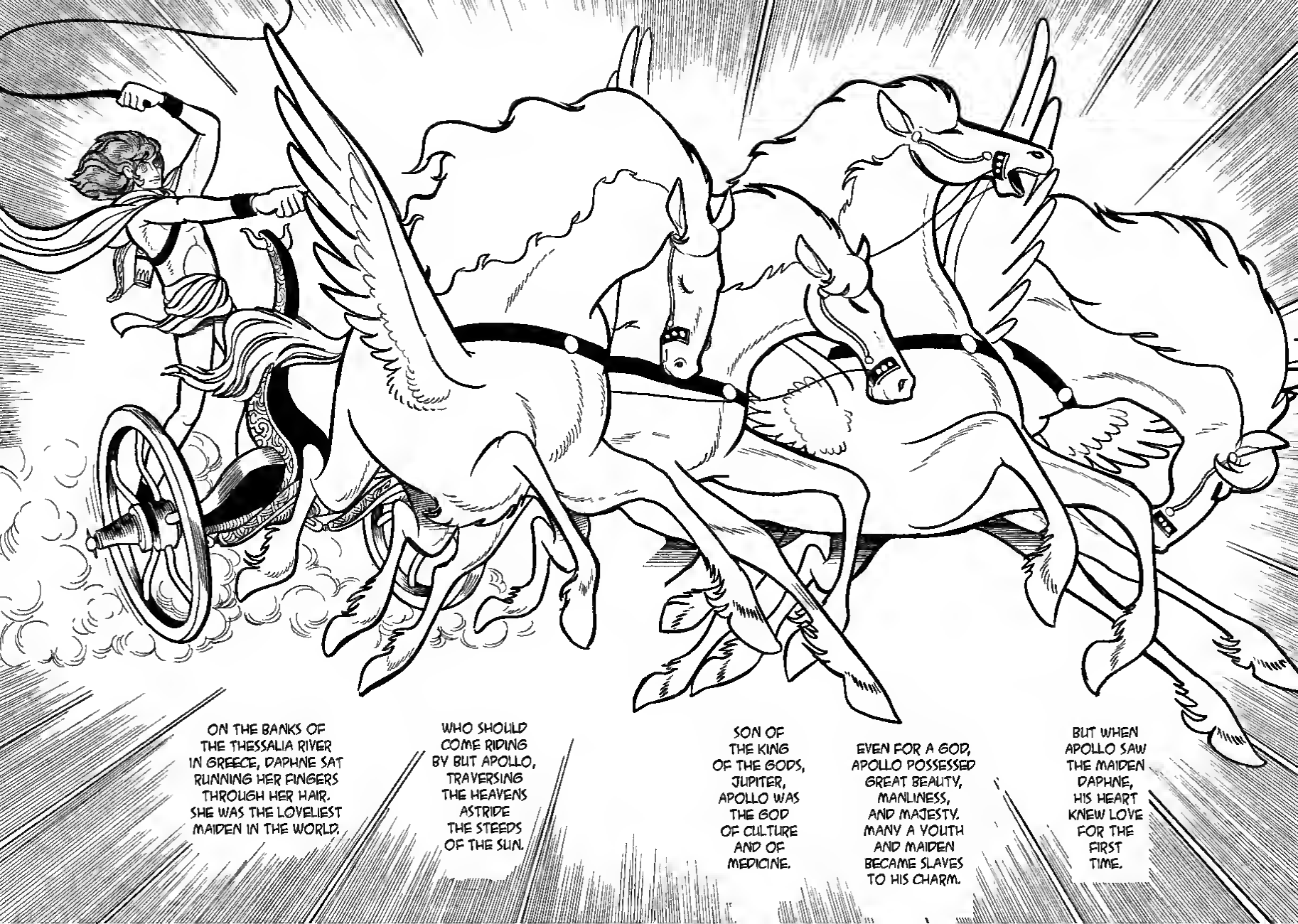
SHOGO!
HANG IN THERE!

YOU POOR THING! HOW AWFUL!
YOU MUSTN'T DIE!
AH...
OH, THANK GOODNESS!
HEHEH... HIROMI, I WON'T LET ANYONE ELSE HAVE YOU. EVEN IF IT KILLS ME.
YOU BELONG ONLY TO ME.
SHOGO SAID THAT?
YES. BUT I THOUGHT HE MEANT IT THE WAY A CHILD TRIES TO KEEP HIS MOTHER OR SISTER ALL TO HIMSELF.


COULD BE. UP UNTIL NOW, SHOGO'S BEEN COMPLETELY CUT OFF FROM LOVE.
HIS MOTHER AND EVERYONE HE'S KNOWN HAVE CAST COLD EYES ON HIM.
PERHAPS HE'S FEELING LOVE TOWARDS A PARENT, LOVING FRIENDSHIP, AND ROMANTIC LOVE TOWARDS YOU ALL AT THE SAME TIME.
BUT SETTING THAT ASIDE...
WHY DID YOU KISS SHOGO WHEN YOU SAVED HIM?
SHOGO OFTEN ASKED ME TO KISS HIM, THAT'S WHY...
BUT ON THIS OCCASION, YOU KISSED HIM REFLEXIVELY, DIDN'T YOU?
HIROMI ...
YOU LOVE HIM TOO, DON'T YOU?

ME ?
LOVE SHOGO ?
I CARE FOR HIM... BUT LOVE?
DOCTOR, I AM LIKE SHOGO'S PHYSICIAN!
HE'S A PATIENT, ISN'T HE?
?
I HAVE THE SENSE OF DUTY IT TAKES TO CURE HIM. FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM WOULD BE...
I ONLY WANTED TO SOFTEN THE PROFOUND HATRED IN HIS HEART,
TO EASE HIS FRUSTRATIONS THROUGH SPORTS.

YET SHOGO FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU!
AN UNFORESEEN OUTCOME, WAS IT?
AND YOU REALLY WANT TO AVOID HIM?
Y...
YES.
THEN BECOME A LAUREL TREE.
WHAT ?
DO YOU KNOW THE GREEK MYTH ABOUT THE GIRL DAPHNE ?


ON THE BANKS OF THE THESSALIA RIVER IN GREECE, DAPHNE SAT RUNNING HER FINGERS THROUGH HER HAIR. SHE WAS THE LOVELIEST MAIDEN IN THE WORLD.
WHO SHOULD COME RIDING BY BUT APOLLO, TRAVERSING THE HEAVENS ASTRIDE THE STEEDS OF THE SUN.
SON OF THE KING OF THE GODS, JUPITER, APOLLO WAS THE GOD OF CULTURE AND OF MEDICINE.
EVEN FOR A GOD, APOLLO POSSESSED GREAT BEAUTY, MANLINESS, AND MAJESTY. MANY A YOUTH AND MAIDEN BECAME SLAVES TO HIS CHARM.
BUT WHEN APOLLO SAW THE MAIDEN DAPHNE, HIS HEART KNEW LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

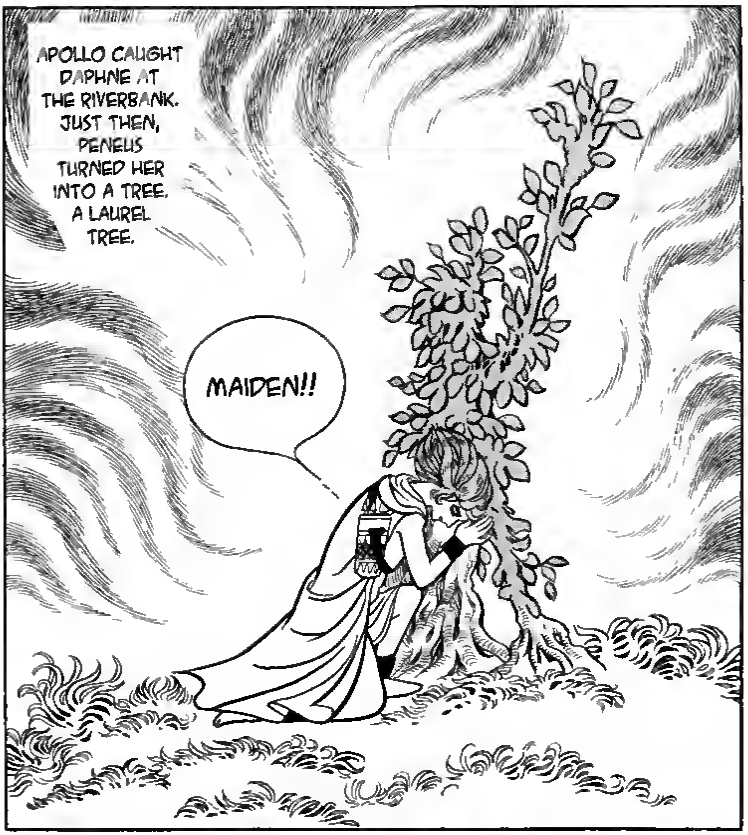
MAIDEN,
I LOVE YOU...
I BEG OF YOU,
RETURN
MY LOVE!

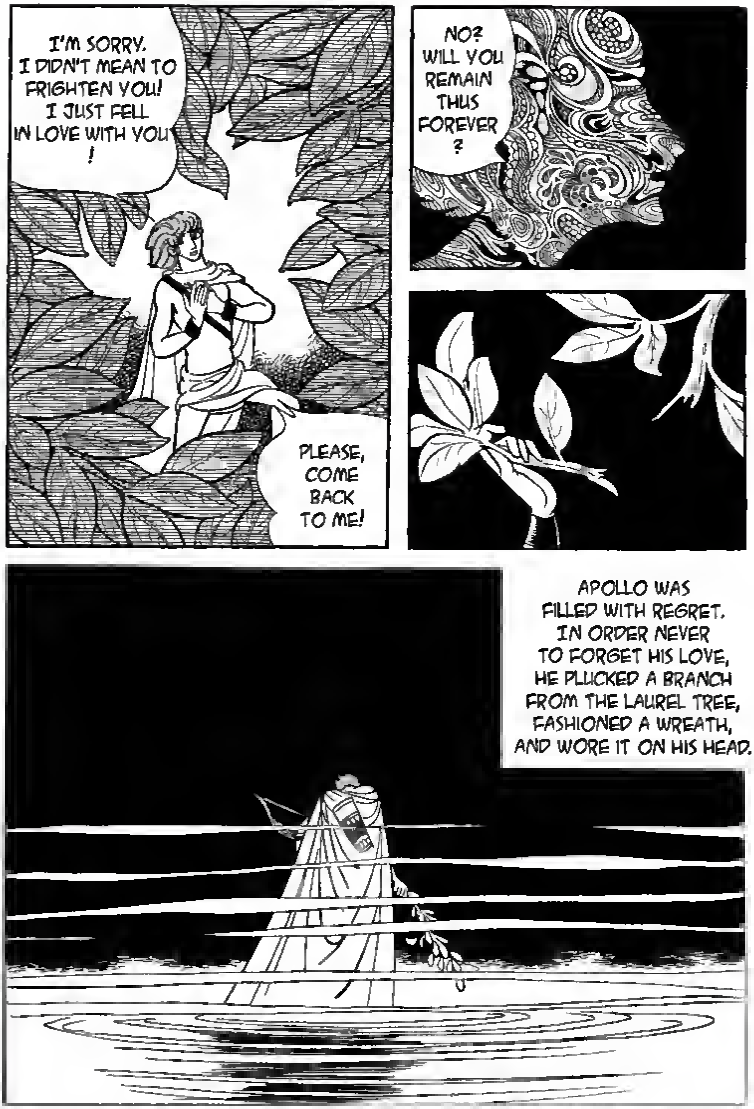
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED. MY NAME IS APOLLO. I AM A DOCTOR, A MUSICIAN, AND A SKILLED ARCHER!
COME AND BE MERRY WITH ME! I WILL SURELY BRING YOU JOY!

YOU SCOUN-DREL!
WHY DO YOU FLEE?
I WON'T HARM YOU!
I'M THE SON OF JUPITER! I'LL GRANT YOU ANYTHING YOU DESIRE!
PLEASE, BE MINE!
HELP!

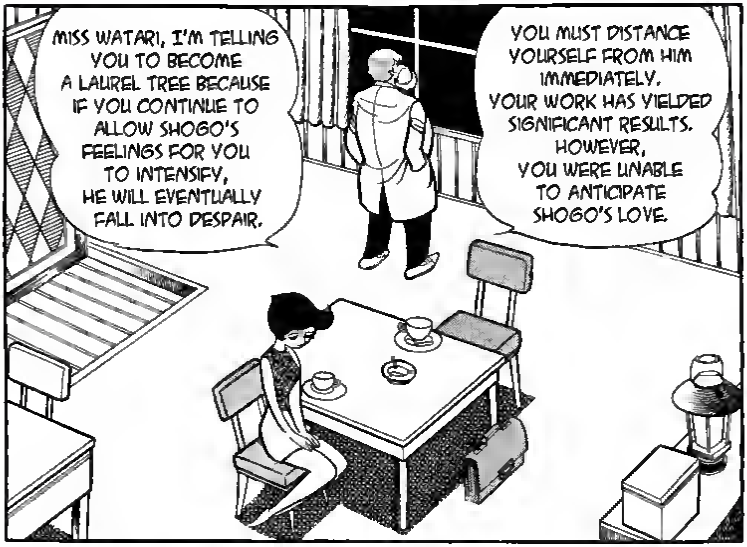
THE MAIDEN DAPHNE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF PENEUS, THE RIVER GOD. PURSUED BY APOLLO, SHE DESPERATELY SOUGHT HER FATHER'S AID.
FATHER, FATHER! SAVE ME! HIDE ME!
GOT YOU!

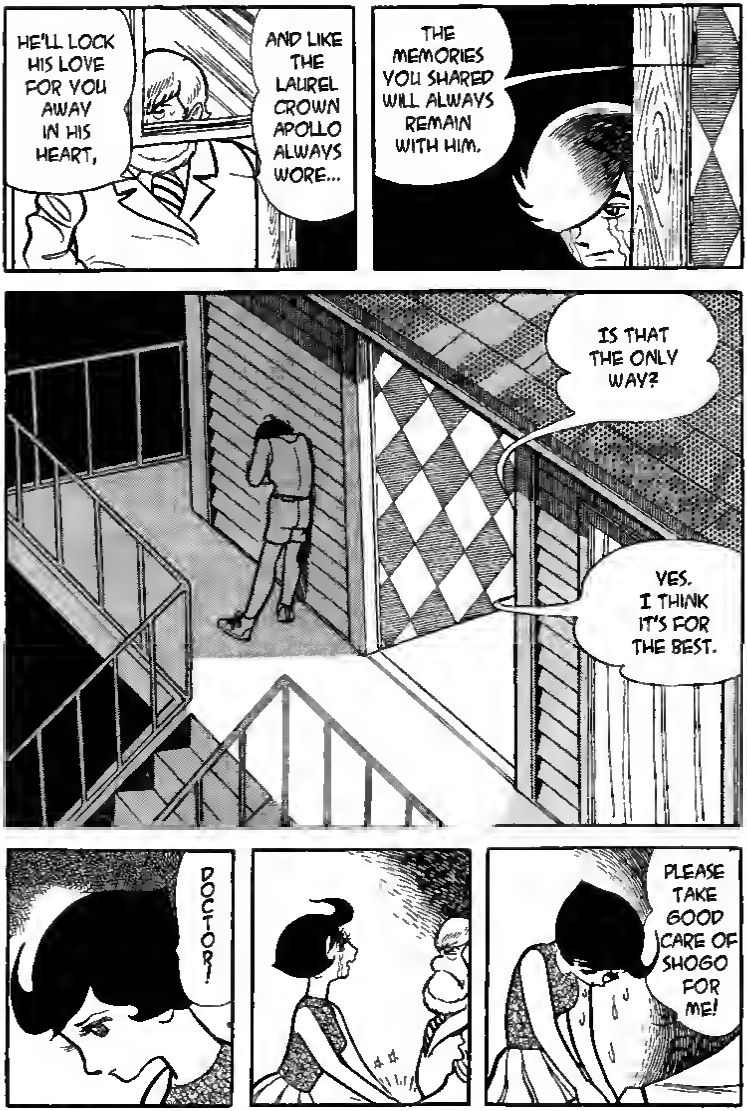
WHAT?


APOLLO CAUGHT DAPHNE AT THE RIVERBANK. JUST THEN, PENEUS TURNED HER INTO A TREE. A LAUREL TREE.
MAIDEN!!


I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO FRIGHTEN YOU! I JUST FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU!
PLEASE, COME BACK TO ME!
NO? WILL YOU REMAIN THUS FOREVER?
APOLLO WAS FILLED WITH REGRET. IN ORDER NEVER TO FORGET HIS LOVE, HE PLUCKED A BRANCH FROM THE LAUREL TREE, FASHIONED A WREATH, AND WORE IT ON HIS HEAD.

EVER SINCE, THEY TELL, THE LAUREL WREATH SERVED AS A SYMBOL OF GLORY FOR GREEKS AND ROMANS AND WAS WORN BY HONORED MEN.

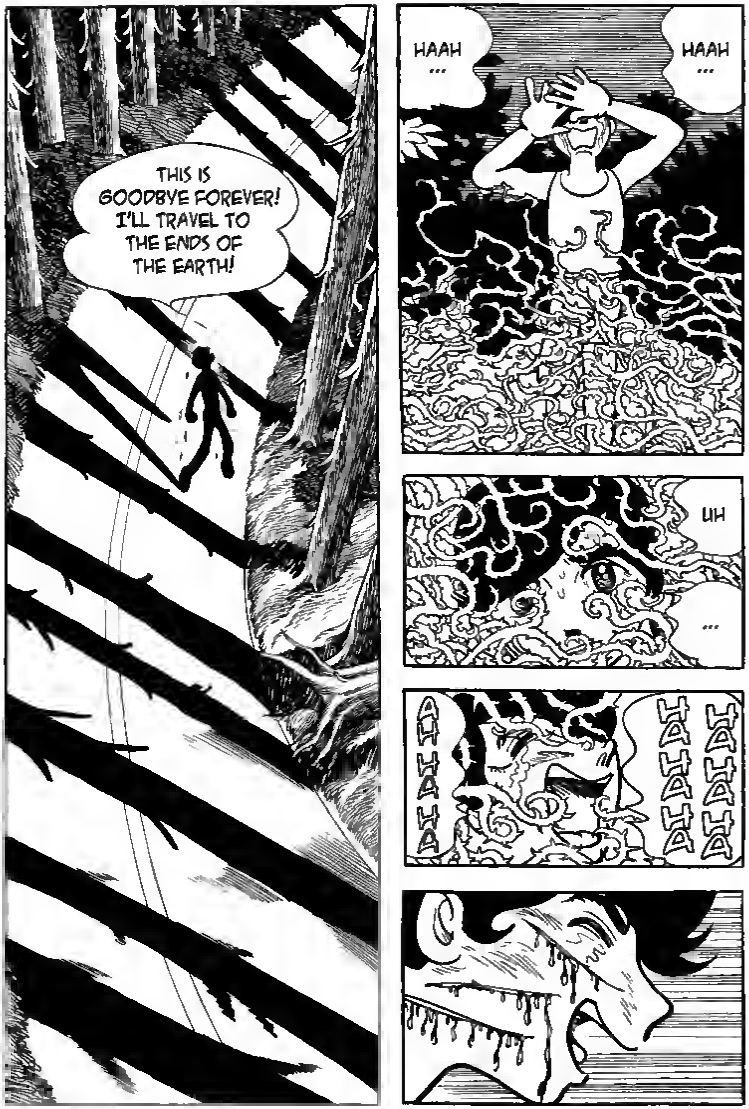

MISS WATARI, I'M TELLING YOU TO BECOME A LAUREL TREE BECAUSE IF YOU CONTINUE TO ALLOW SHOGO'S FEELINGS FOR YOU TO INTENSIFY, HE WILL EVENTUALLY FALL INTO DESPAIR.
YOU MUST DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM HIM IMMEDIATELY. YOUR WORK HAS YIELDED SIGNIFICANT RESULTS. HOWEVER, YOU WERE UNABLE TO ANTICIPATE SHOGO'S LOVE.


HE'LL LOCK HIS LOVE FOR YOU AWAY IN HIS HEART,
AND LIKE THE LAUREL CROWN APOLLO ALWAYS WORE...
THE MEMORIES YOU SHARED WILL ALWAYS REMAIN WITH HIM.
IS THAT THE ONLY WAY?
YES. I THINK IT'S FOR THE BEST.
DOCTOR!
PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF SHOGO FOR ME!

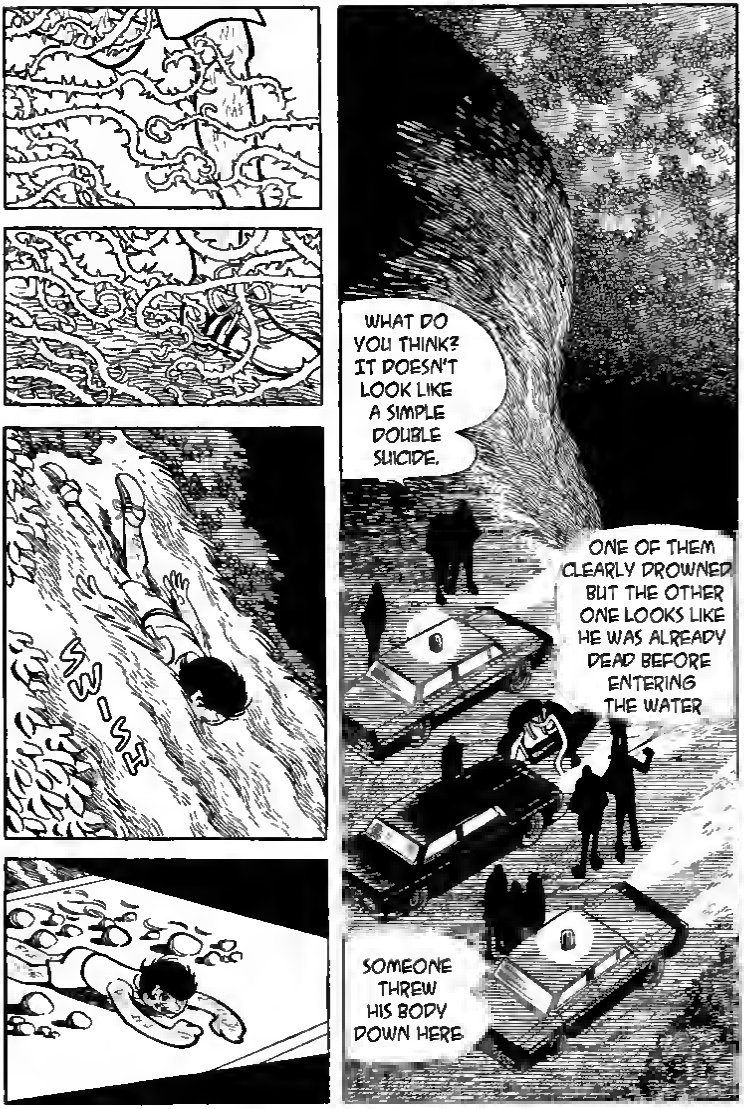
VERY WELL. I WILL RETAIN THE ATHLETIC REGIMEN YOU'VE CREATED FOR HIM. BUT I'M AFRAID HIS FITS OF HATRED FOR LOVE...
WON'T EASILY BE CURED JUST YET.

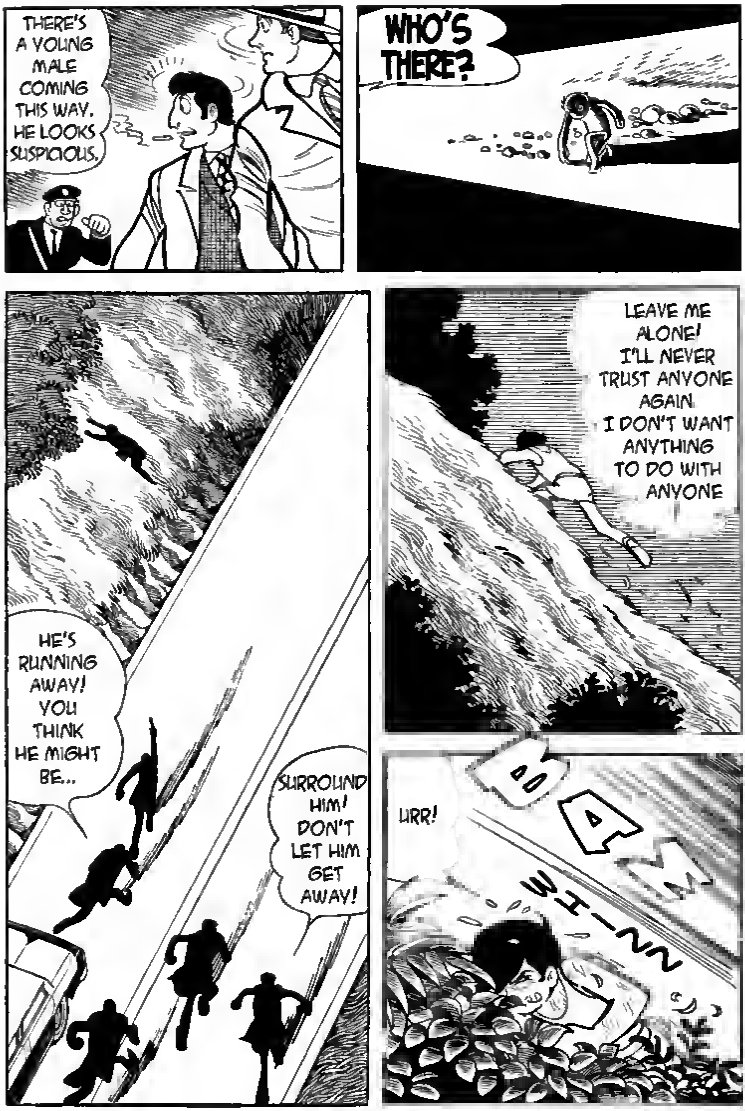
YOU STUPID, STUPID, STUPID IDIOT! HIROMI, YOU BIG LIAR!

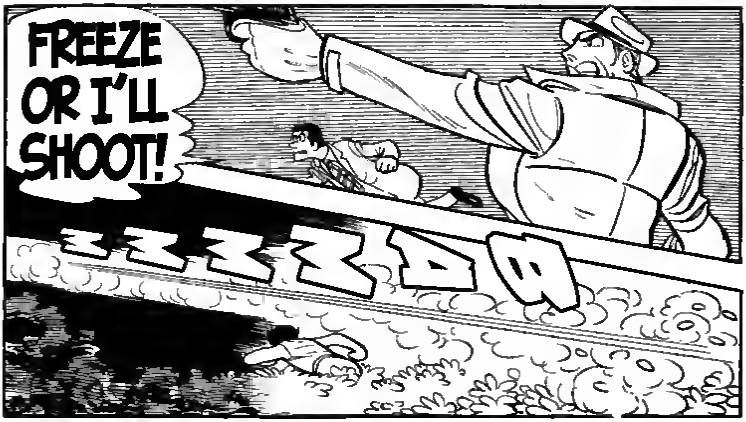
Y-YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO. I'LL GO!!
THAT SHOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY!


THIS IS GOODBYE FOREVER! I'LL TRAVEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH!
HAAH ...
HAAH ...
UH ...
AHAHA
AHAHA
AHAHA
AHAHA

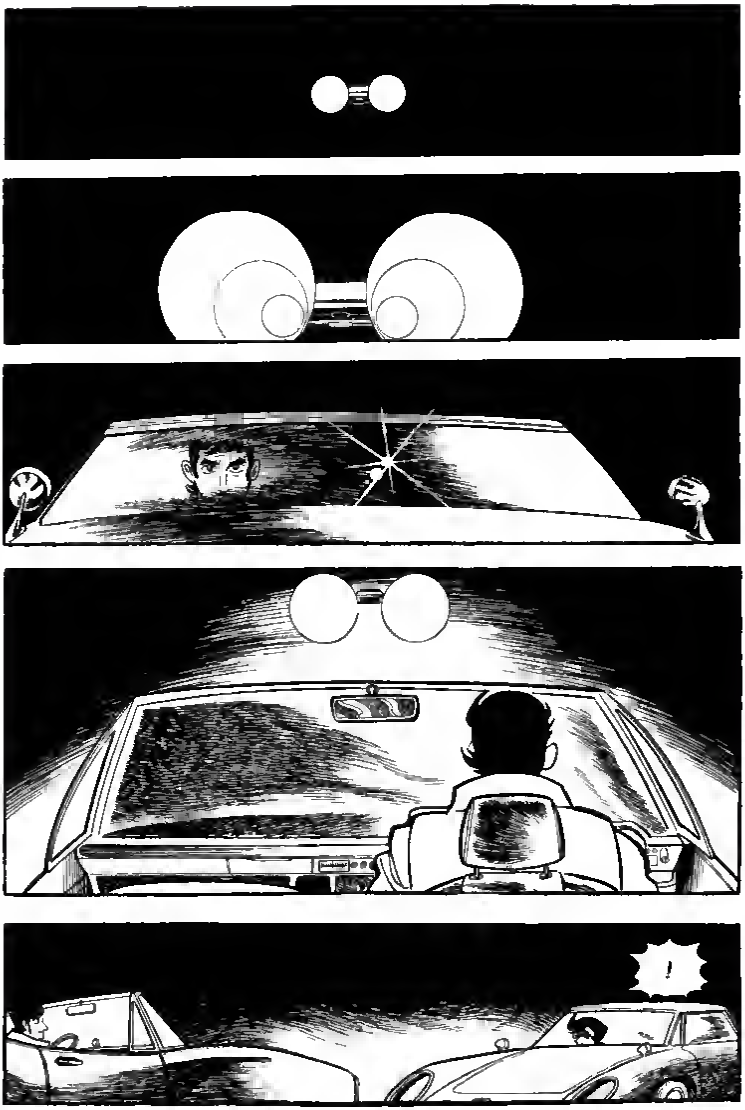
SHOGO'S LATE GETTING BACK.
IT'S BEST YOU DON'T SEE HIM AGAIN.
I KNOW... BUT I WANTED TO GET A GLIMPSE OF HIM BEFORE I LEFT.
I'LL STAY AND WAIT FOR HIM.
I'LL CONTACT YOU LATER AND LET YOU KNOW HOW IT WENT.
NOW, YOU'D BEST BE GO-ING.
VROOM


WHAT DO YOU THINK? IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A SIMPLE DOUBLE SUICIDE.
ONE OF THEM CLEARLY DROWNED BUT THE OTHER ONE LOOKS LIKE HE WAS ALREADY DEAD BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER
SOMEONE THREW HIS BODY DOWN HERE


THERE'S A YOUNG MALE COMING THIS WAY. HE LOOKS SUSPICIOUS.
WHO'S THERE?
LEAVE ME ALONE! I'LL NEVER TRUST ANYONE AGAIN. I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANYONE
HE'S RUNNING AWAY! YOU THINK HE MIGHT BE...
SURROUND HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!
URR!
BAM
SHINN

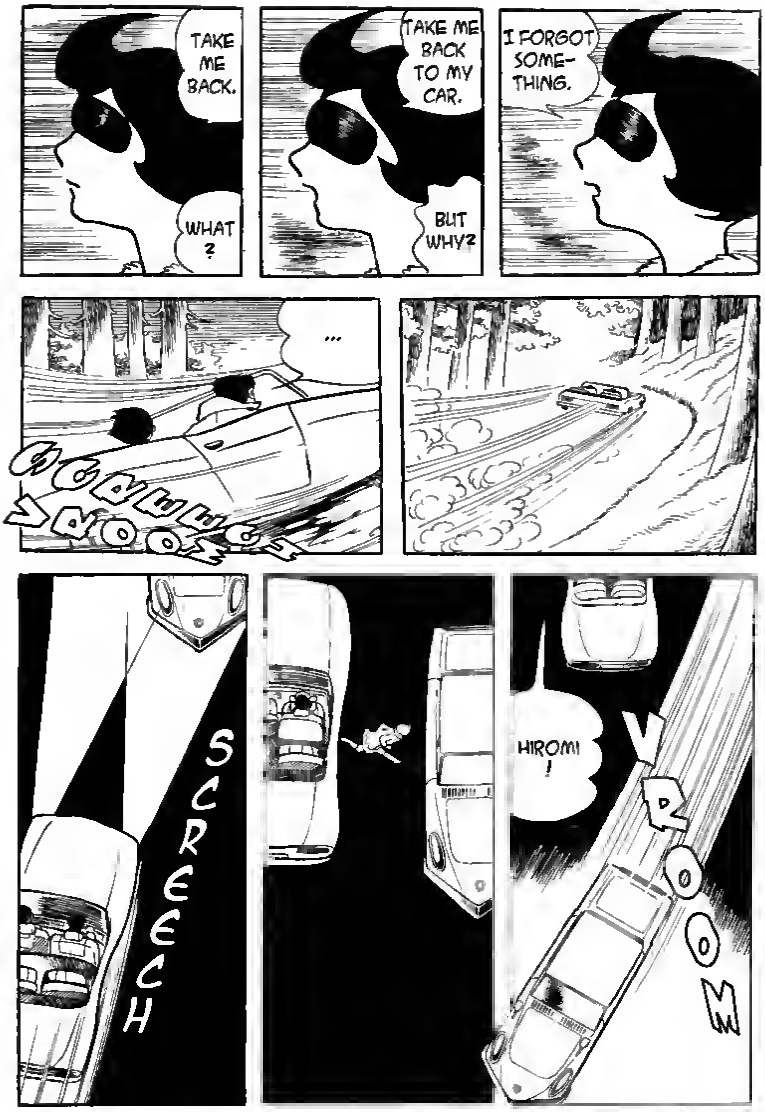

FREEZE OR I'LL SHOOT!
BANG

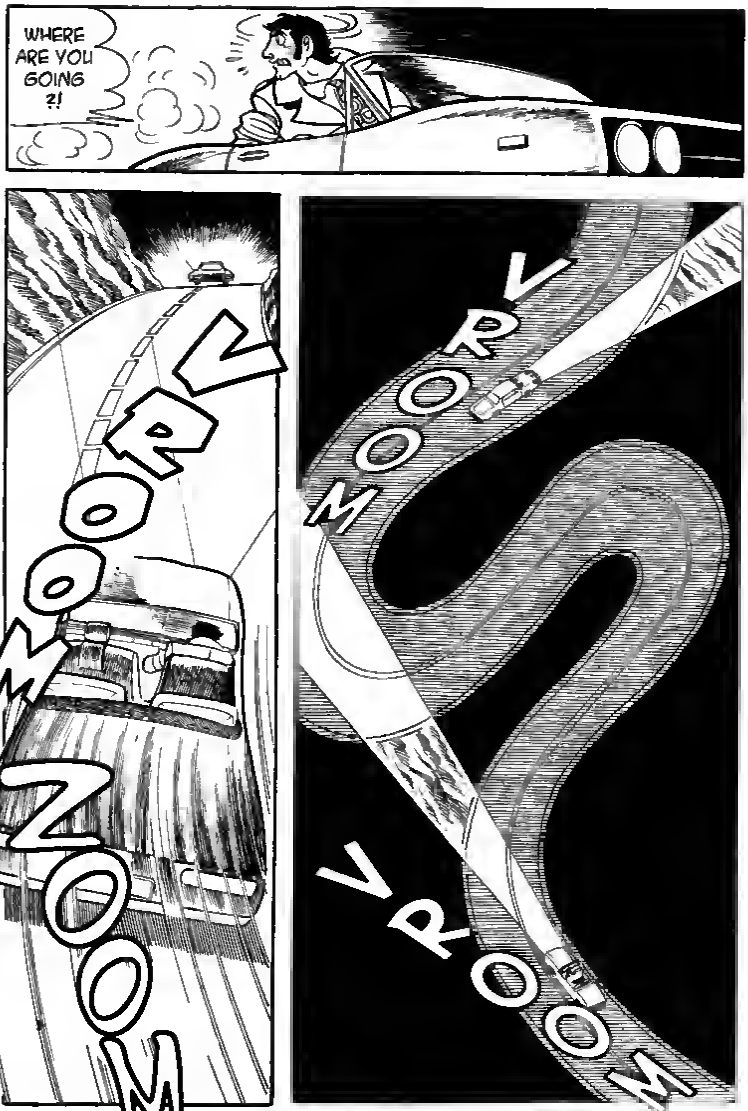
HUFF
HUFF



I'VE COME TO BRING YOU BACK, HIROMI.
YOU!
JUST GET IN MY CAR. I'LL GIVE YOU A RIDE.
LEAVE YOURS HERE. I'LL SEND SOMEONE TO PICK IT UP TOMOR-ROW ...
I'M GLAD I CAUGHT YOU.

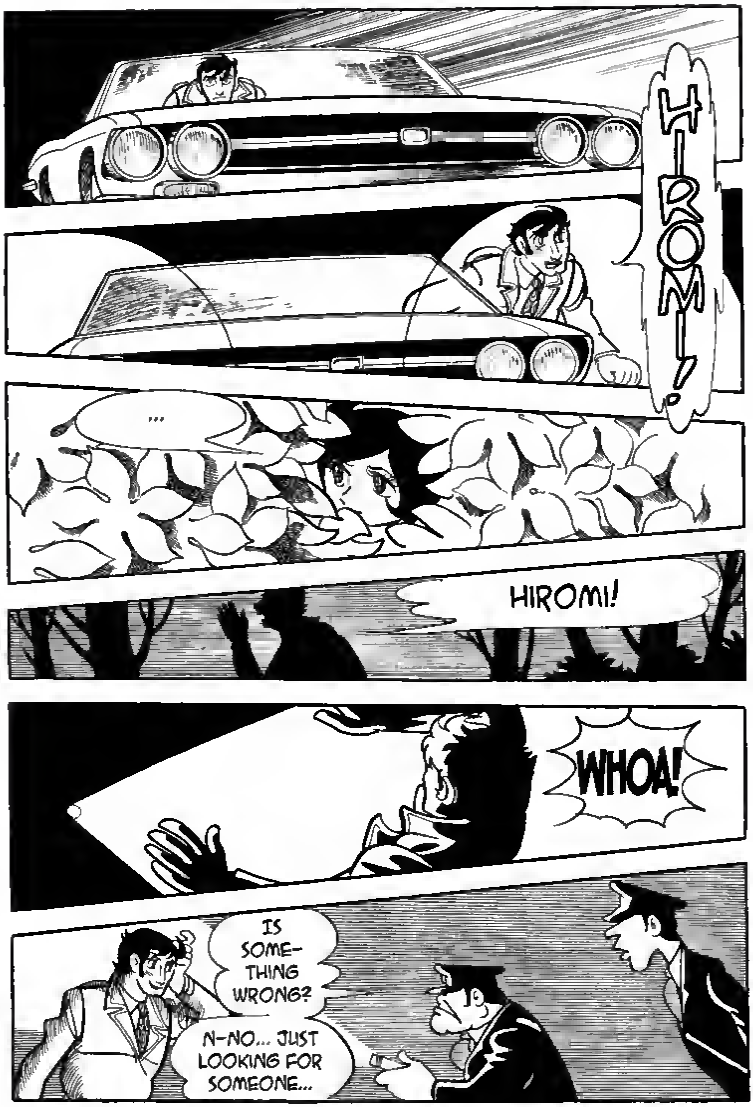
I RAN INTO DR. ENOKI IN TOKYO AND WE SPOKE ABOUT YOU.
I MISUNDER-STOOD...
I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU THOUGHT OF THAT SHOGO KID AS A PATIENT.
IN ANY CASE, I COULDN'T JUST LEAVE YOU OUT HERE.
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU, SO I DECIDED TO COME AND GET YOU.


TAKE ME BACK.
WHAT?
TAKE ME BACK TO MY CAR.
BUT WHY?
I FORGOT SOMETHING.
...
VROOOOOM
SCREECH
HIROMI!
VROOM


WHERE ARE YOU GOING ?!
VROOM
VROOM
VROOM

SHOGO!
I WON'T ABANDON YOU!

VROOM
VRMMM
VRMMM

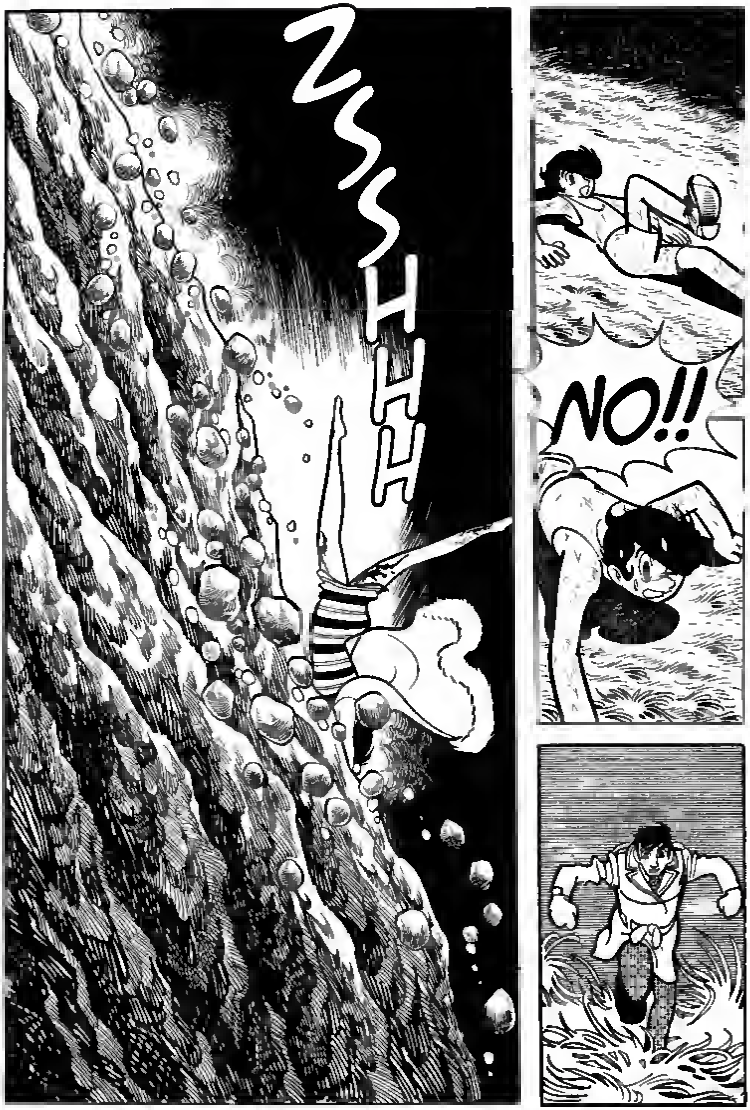

HIROMI!
...
HIROMI!
WHOA!
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
N-NO... JUST LOOKING FOR SOMEONE...

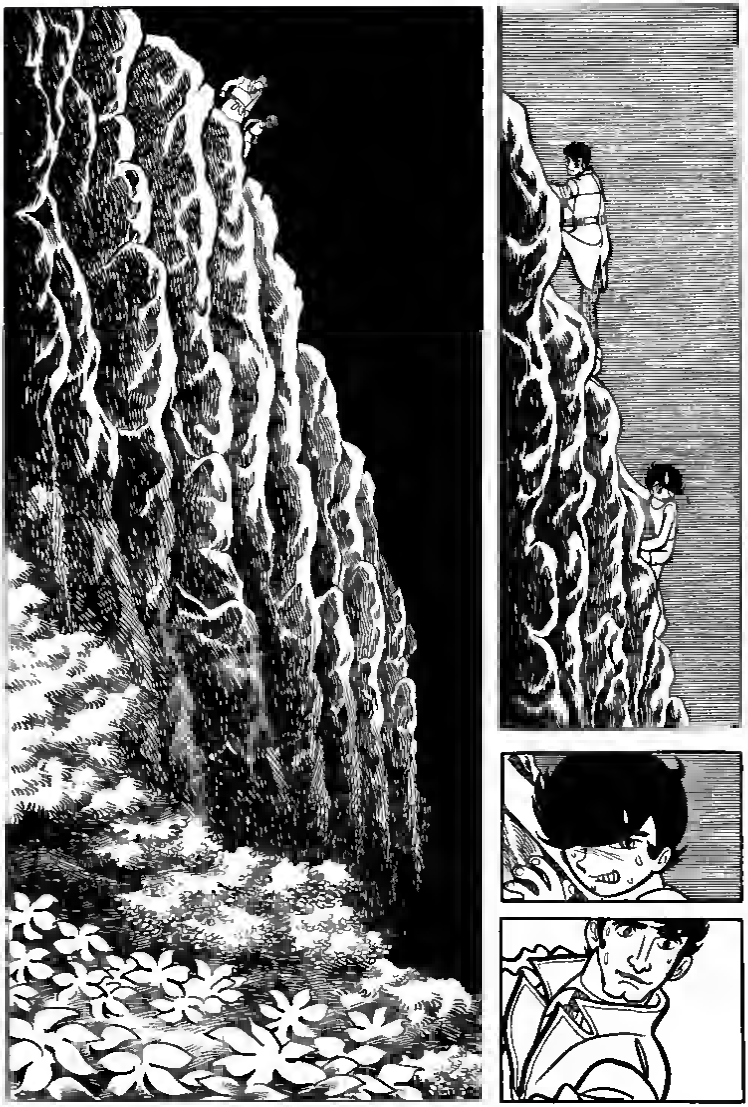
WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT, OFFICER?
THERE'S BEEN A DOUBLE SUICIDE. WE THINK WE FOUND A MATERIAL WITNESS, A BOY, BUT HE RAN OFF INTO THE MOUNTAINS. WE'RE SEARCHING FOR HIM.
A BOY? WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?
LIKE HE WAS... GETTING READY FOR SOME MARATHON.
I KNOW HIM.
OH?
HE LIVES IN A MOUNTAIN CABIN FURTHER DOWN. HE'S DANGEROUS—THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'LL DO.
WELL, NOW! YOU SEEM TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT HIM.
I'VE MET HIM BEFORE.
WHICH WAY DID HE GO, OFFICER?
WE THINK HE'S HIDING UP ON THAT CLIFF.
I SEE. PLEASE EXCUSE ME.

HIROMI!
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
WHAT IS IT ABOUT THAT LITTLE PUNK
THAT YOU CAN'T LET GO OF?
DON'T PLAY ME, HIROMI— YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME MAD!

SHOGO!

NO!
AIIII-.

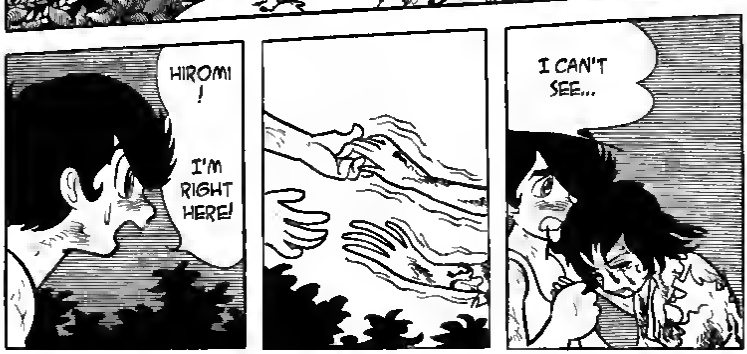

NO!!



HIROMI!

HIROMI!

SHOGO... WHERE ARE YOU?


HIROMI!
I'M RIGHT HERE!
I CAN'T SEE...

YOUR EYES ARE BLEEDING! DID YOU HIT YOUR FACE?
OH, SHOGO! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! I'M SO GLAD!

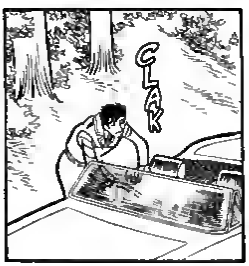
YOU PUSHED ME BACK AND KEPT ME FROM FALLING.

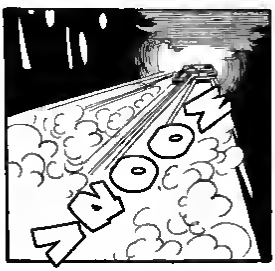
HIROMI, THIS IS AWFUL! YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME!

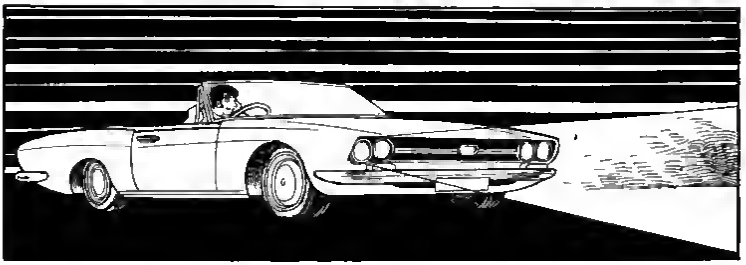
YOUR EYES... ARE THEY HURT BADLY?

SOME BRANCH CAME RIGHT AT THEM... THEY'RE CRUSHED, I THINK ...
MY HEAD FEELS LIKE IT'S SPLITTING.

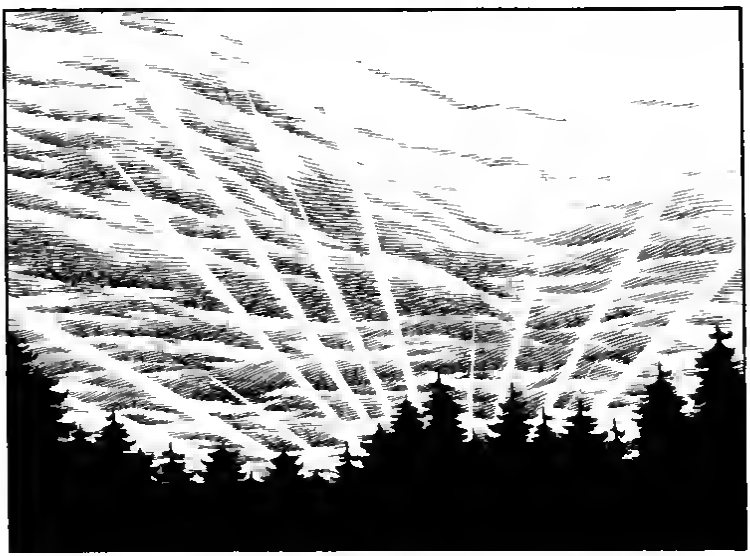
YOU NEED FIRST AID! I'LL GO GET HELP!


CLAK


VROOM



HIROMI CAN DO WHAT SHE WANTS WITH THAT LITTLE PUNK.
SHE WAS CUTE, BUT A BLIND WOMAN... NO THANKS !!

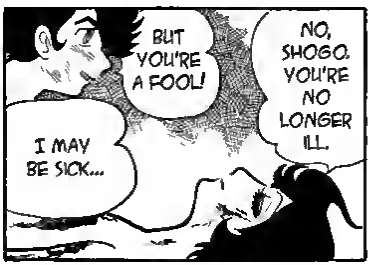


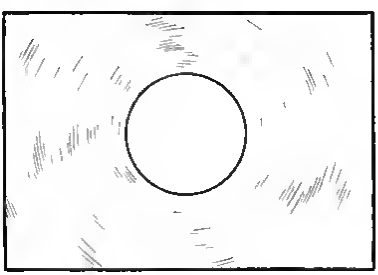
THANK YOU.
YOU WERE BLEEDING SO BADLY ...
I DIDN'T WANT TO MOVE YOU.
THAT'S OKAY. THANK YOU.
HE NEVER DID COME BACK WITH HELP.

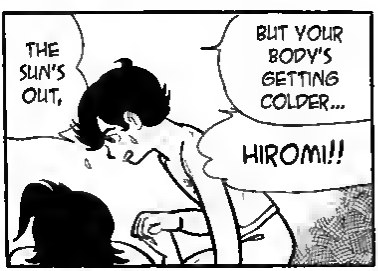
I LOVE THE SINGING OF THE BIRDS IN THE MORNING.
I CAN'T SEE IT NOW, BUT I SWAM IN THIS LAKE PRETTY OFTEN. THE WATER LOOKS BEAUTIFUL IN THE MORNING LIGHT, DOESN'T IT?

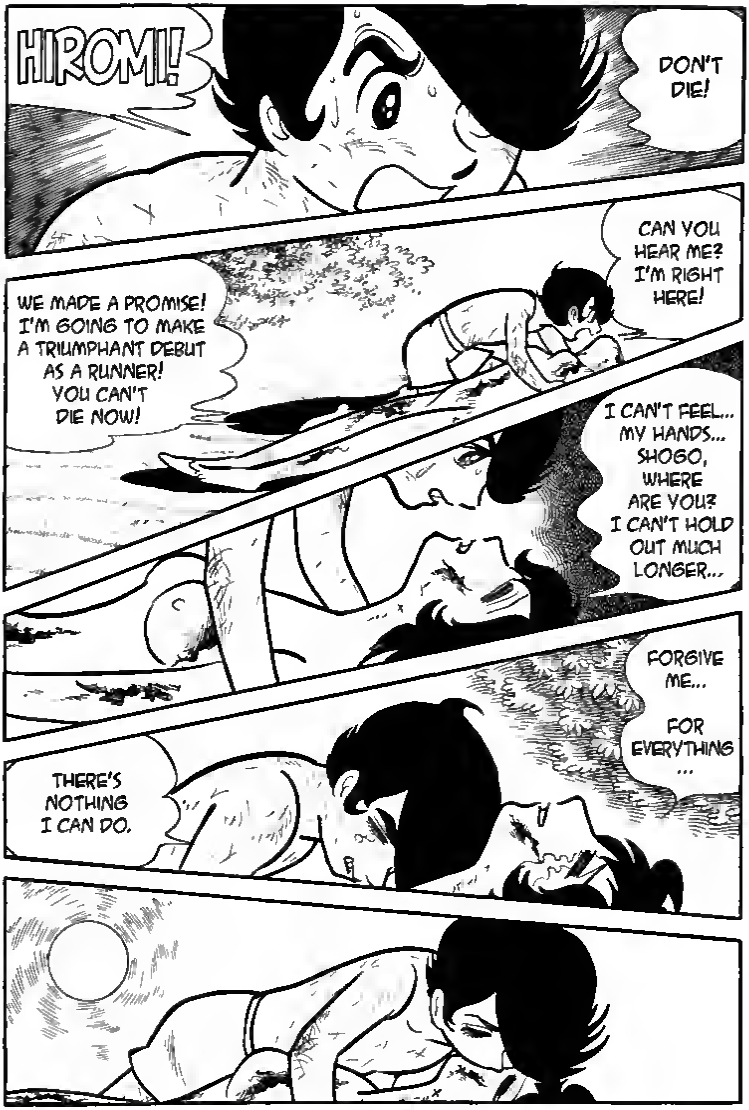
YES. IT'S VERY CLEAR TODAY.

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE
COME BACK HERE FOR ME.
I WOULD HAVE MANAGED ON MY OWN...

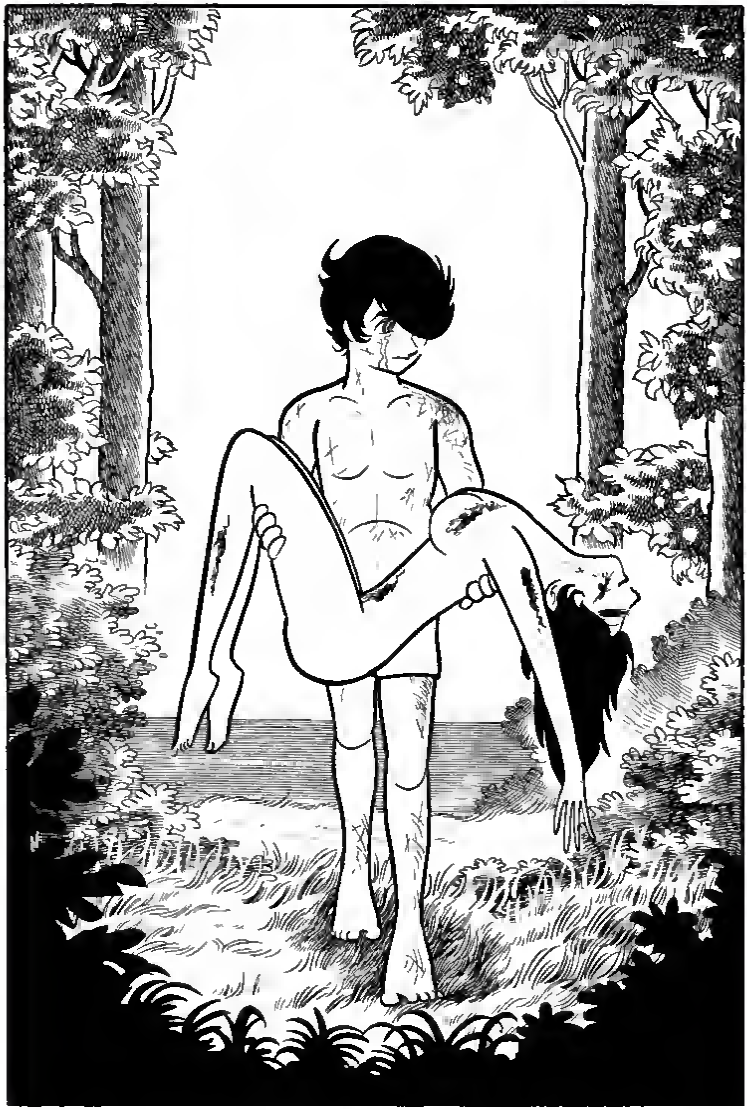

BUT YOU'RE A FOOL!
NO, SHOGO. YOU'RE NO LONGER ILL.
I MAY BE SICK...




THE SUN'S OUT,
BUT YOUR BODY'S GETTING COLDER...
HIROMI!!


HIROMI!
DON'T DIE!
CAN YOU HEAR ME? I'M RIGHT HERE!
WE MADE A PROMISE! I'M GOING TO MAKE A TRIUMPHANT DEBUT AS A RUNNER! YOU CAN'T DIE NOW!
I CAN'T FEEL... MY HANDS... SHOGO, WHERE ARE YOU? I CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER...
FORGIVE ME... FOR EVERYTHING ...
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

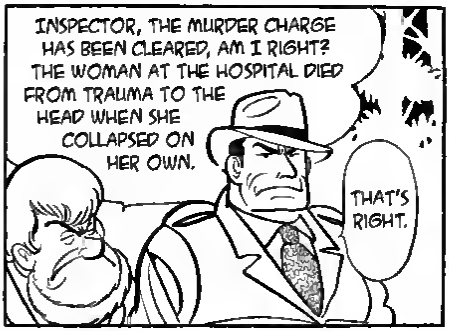
HIROMI!

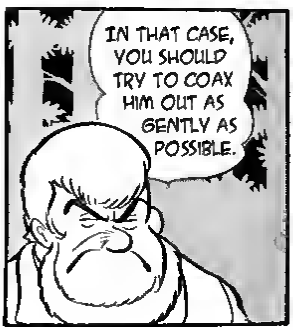


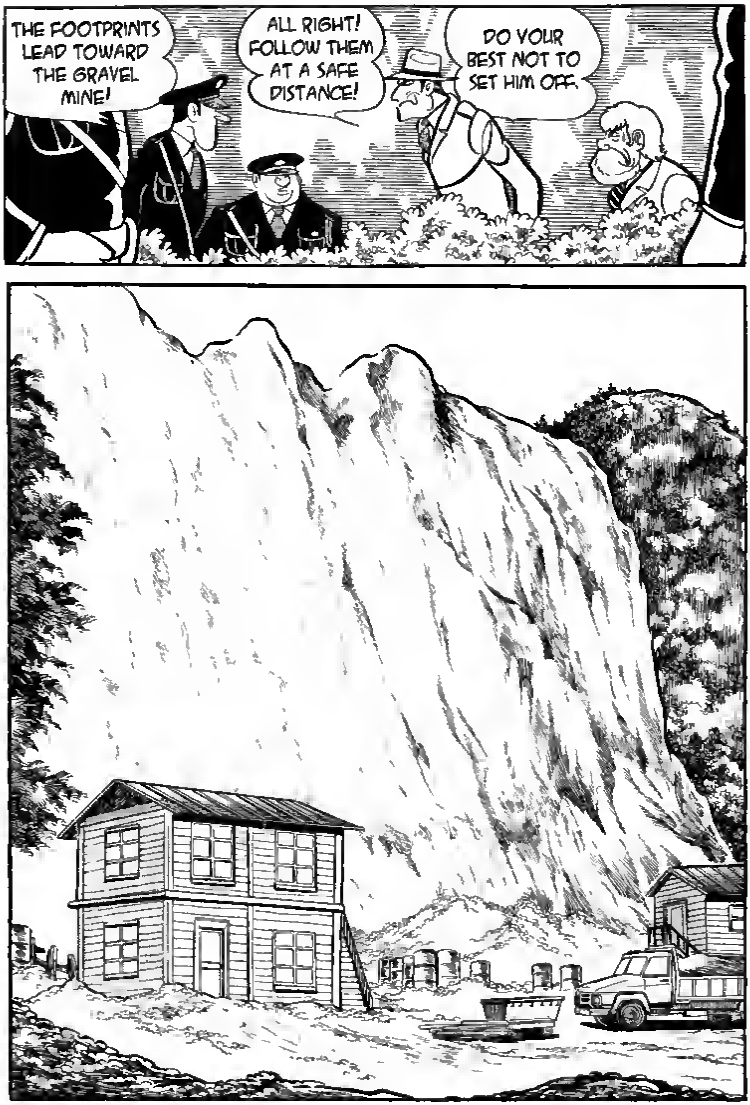
SHOGO CHIKAISHI! SHOW YOURSELF!
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE!
YOU ARE WANTED ON SUSPICION
OF MURDER AND ASSAULT,
AT THE HOSPITAL AND IN SHINJUKU.
BUT THERE'S A WITNESS WHO HAS
TESTIFIED ON YOUR BEHALF,
SO DON'T BE AFRAID—
GIVE YOURSELF UP.

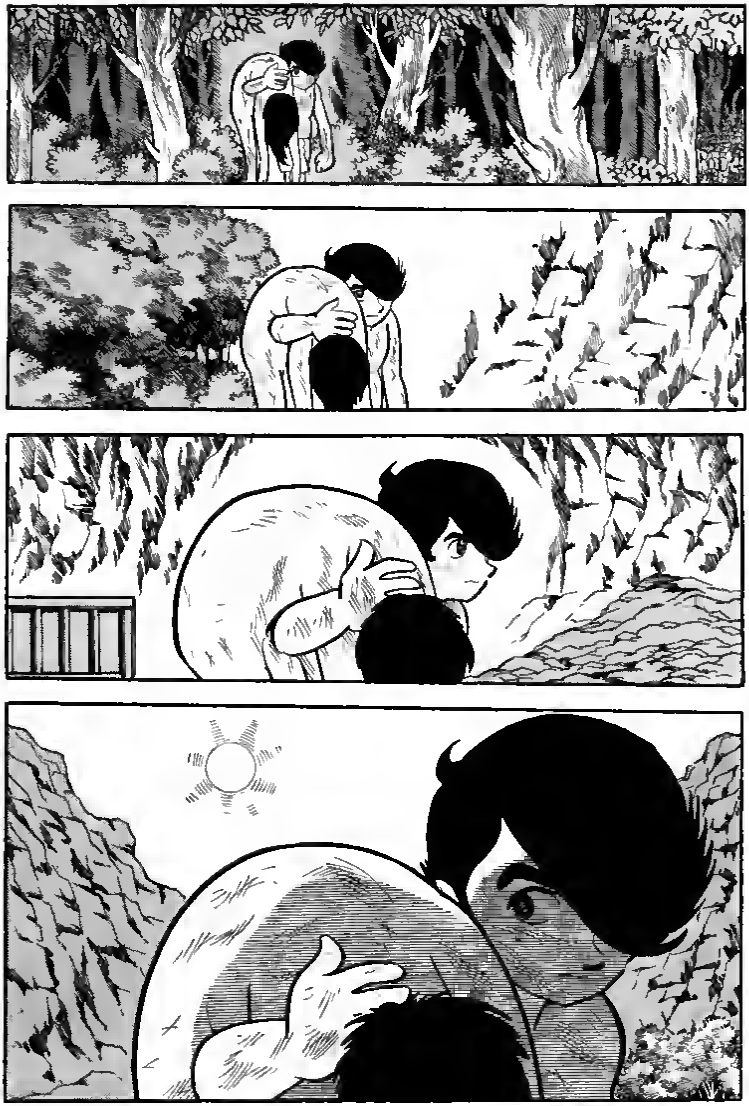
I HEAR HE'S NOT PLAYING WITH A FULL DECK.
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE MIGHT PULL. BE ON YOUR GUARD.
SUZAP
!!!
EH HEHEH...
HEHEH

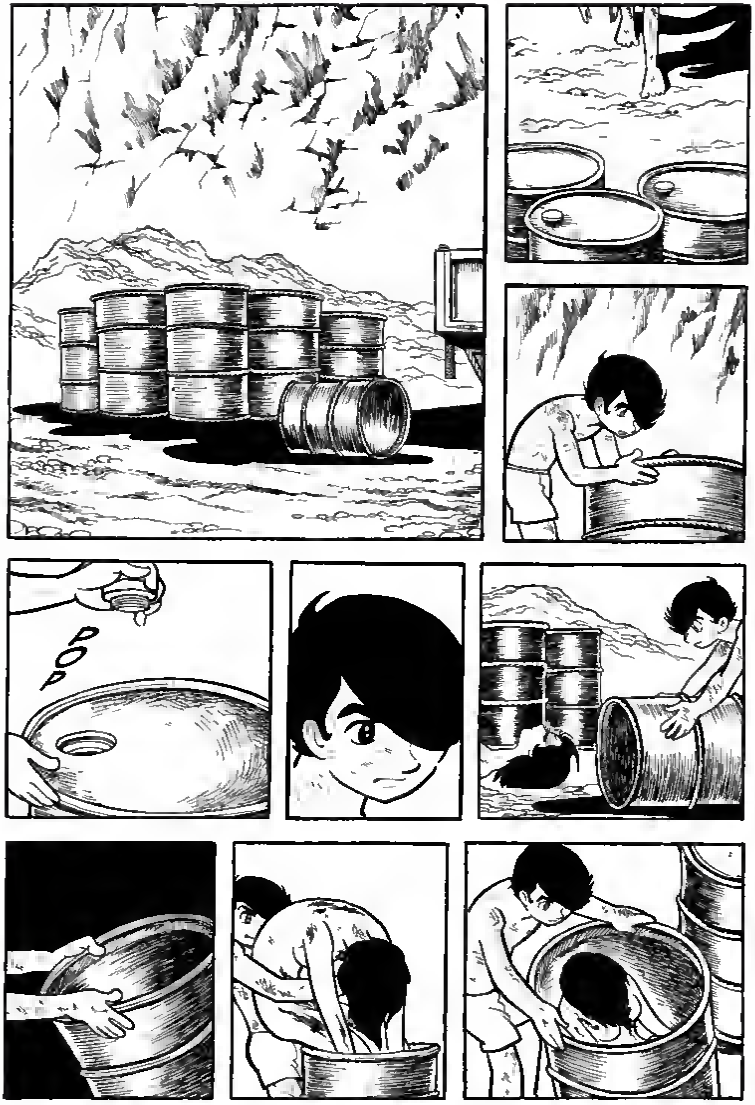
HAVE YOU FOUND SHOGO CHIKAISHI AND HIROMI WATARI?
WE DON'T SEE THEM YET, BUT WE'RE SURE WE HAVE THEM SURROUNDED.
THEY FOUND SOME FOOTPRINTS ON THE BANK OF THE LAKE.
WHICH WAY DO THEY GO?


INSPECTOR, THE MURDER CHARGE HAS BEEN CLEARED, AM I RIGHT? THE WOMAN AT THE HOSPITAL DIED FROM TRAUMA TO THE HEAD WHEN SHE COLLAPSED ON HER OWN.
THAT'S RIGHT.


IN THAT CASE, YOU SHOULD TRY TO COAX HIM OUT AS GENTLY AS POSSIBLE.


THE FOOTPRINTS LEAD TOWARD THE GRAVEL MINE!
ALL RIGHT! FOLLOW THEM AT A SAFE DISTANCE!
DO YOUR BEST NOT TO SET HIM OFF.




DO
DO

SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
!
SHOGO! IT'S ME, THE HOSPITAL DIRECTOR! WHERE IS HIROMI? LISTEN TO ME, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.

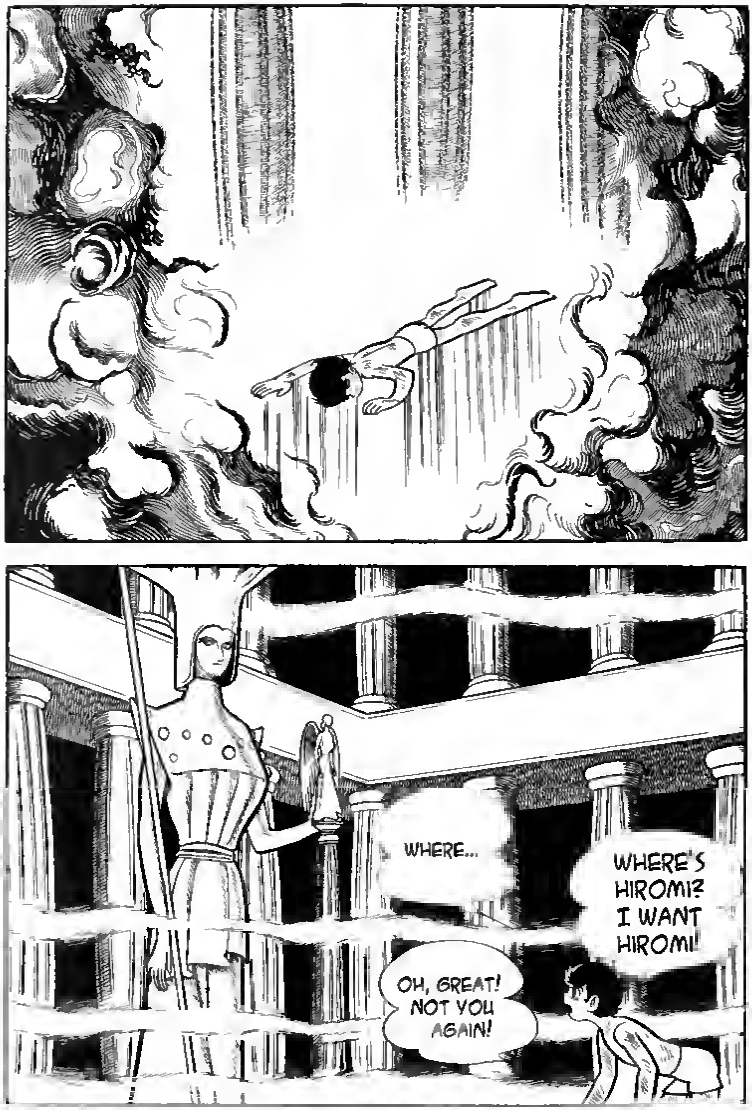
HIROMI'S DEAD.
WHAT ?
SHE'S HERE IN THIS OIL BARREL.
I WANT TO GIVE HER A FUNERAL, SO I'M FILLING IT WITH OIL.
HIROMI'S DEAD? DON'T TELL ME... YOU DIDN'T...
WAIT! I'M COMING OVER THERE! I WANT TO SEE HIROMI!
NO WAY! IF YOU COME ONE STEP CLOSER, I'LL LIGHT IT.
TELL ME HOW HIROMI DIED!
I'M NOT GIVING HER TO ANYONE! I'M TAKING HER TO HEAVEN!
I FINALLY HAVE A NORMAL HUMAN HEART.
IT FEELS GOOD. I WANT TO GO TO A WORLD JUST FOR THE TWO OF US.
SHOGO! YOU INTEND TO DIE, TOO?
DON'T BE A FOOL! YOU HAVE A WHOLE NEW LIFE AHEAD OF YOU!

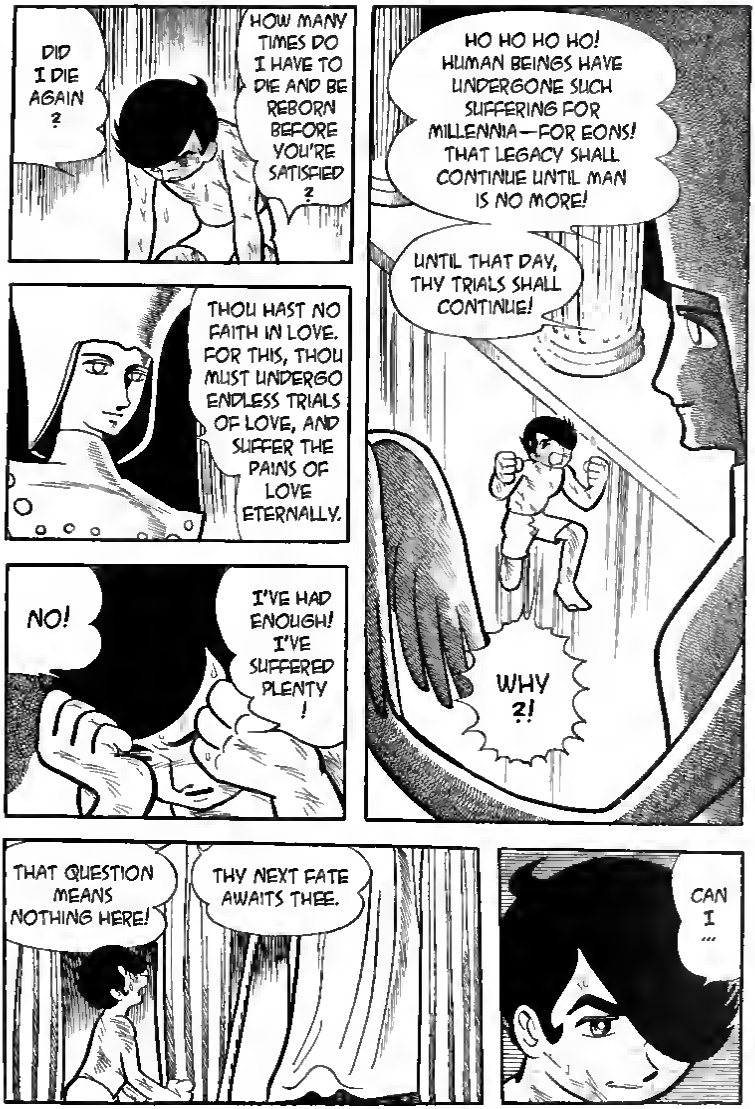
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR BREATH.
GO AWAY. LEAVE US ALONE TOGETHER, DOCTOR.
SHOGO, LET'S TALK THIS OVER! WHY DO YOU WANT TO DIE TOO?
—I'LL BUY SOME TIME WHILE YOU COME UP WITH A PLAN!
I FOUND A COUPLE THAT TRIED TO COMMIT DOUBLE SUICIDE. THE WOMAN WAS STILL ALIVE. WHEN I HEARD HER STORY, I THOUGHT THEIR SUICIDE PACT WAS RIDICULOUS. THERE WAS NO REASON FOR THEM TO DIE TOGETHER.
BUT WHEN HIROMI WAS DYING...
I WANTED SO MUCH FOR HER TO LIVE THAT I'D HAVE LET HER SUCK MY LIFE OUT OF ME. WHEN YOU REALLY LOVE SOMEONE...
IT PUTS YOU ABOVE LIFE AND DEATH.
YOU'RE CURED!

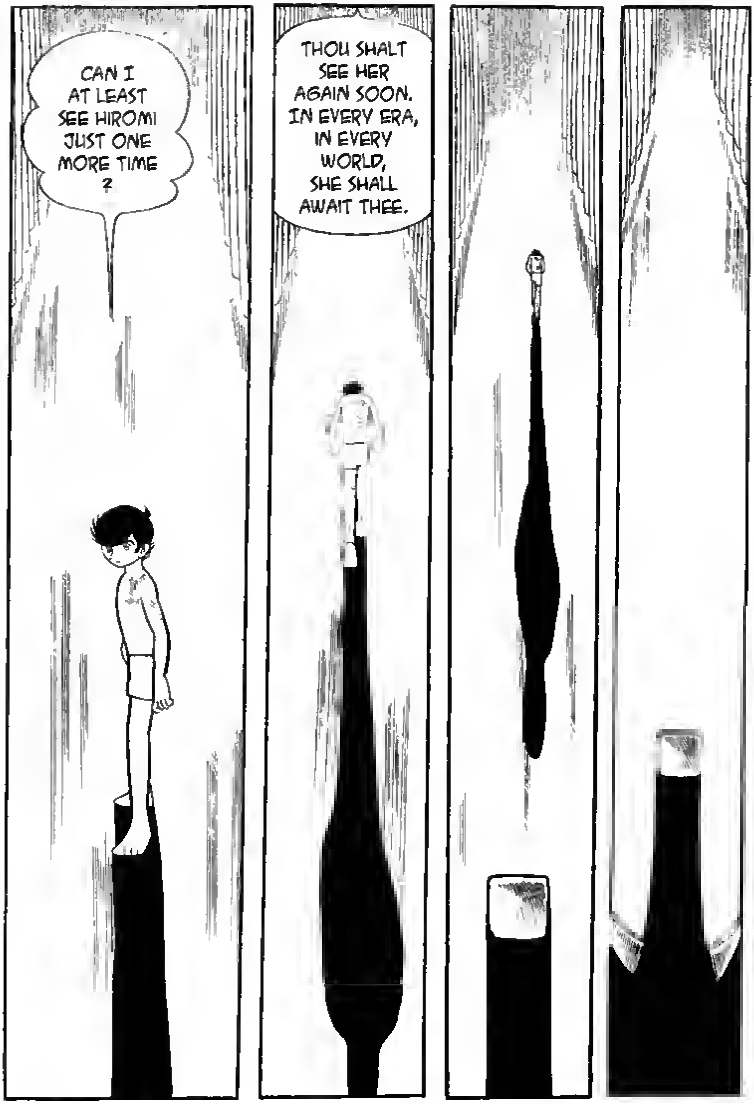
SHOW YOURSELVES, YOU SNEAKY BASTARDS!
DON'T SHOOT!
WAIT

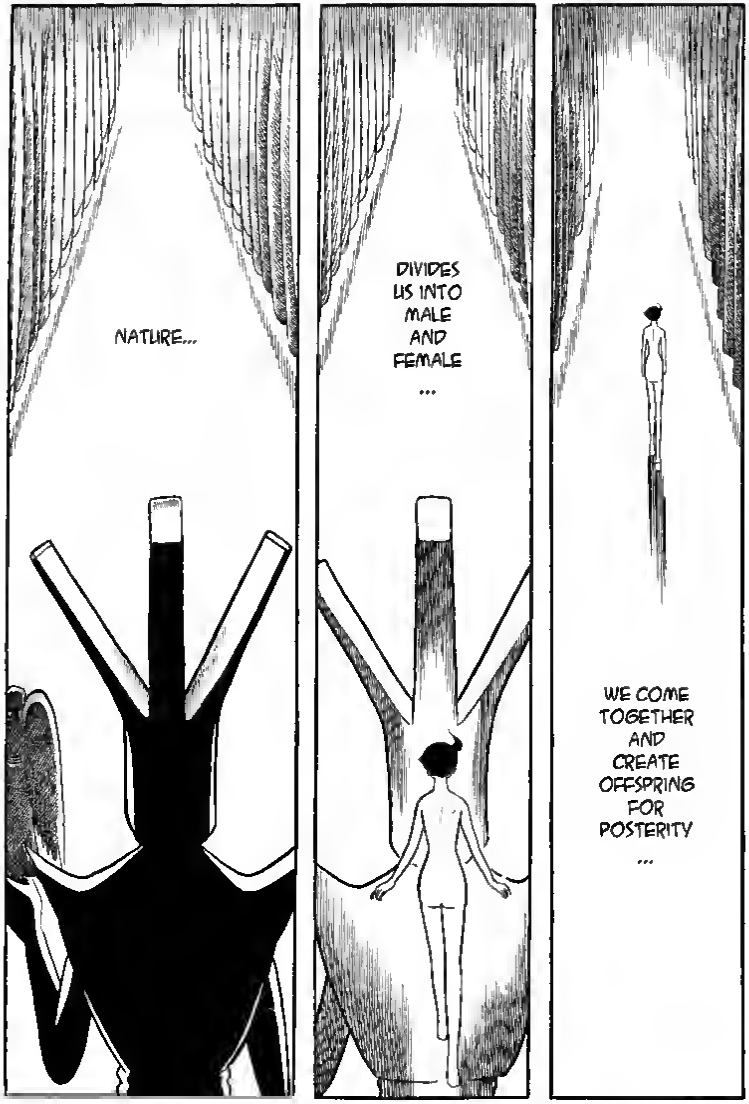
SHOGO!
T-TOO LATE...
KAKAKABOOM

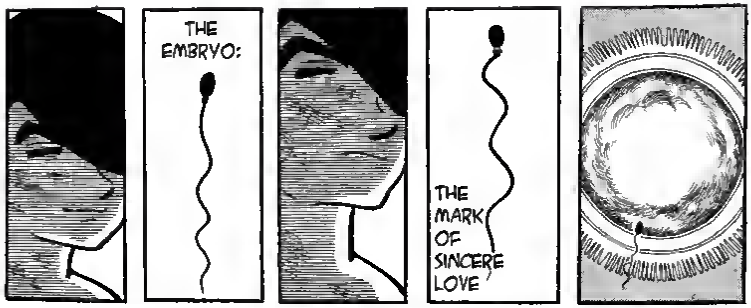
ROAR


WHERE...
WHERE'S HIROMI? I WANT HIROMI!
OH, GREAT! NOT YOU AGAIN!


DID I DIE AGAIN ?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO DIE AND BE REBORN BEFORE YOU'RE SATISFIED ?
HO HO HO HO! HUMAN BEINGS HAVE UNDERGONE SUCH SUFFERING FOR MILLENNIA—FOR EONS! THAT LEGACY SHALL CONTINUE UNTIL MAN IS NO MORE!
UNTIL THAT DAY, THY TRIALS SHALL CONTINUE!
THOU HAST NO FAITH IN LOVE. FOR THIS, THOU MUST UNDERGO ENDLESS TRIALS OF LOVE, AND SUFFER THE PAINS OF LOVE ETERNALLY.
NO!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH! I'VE SUFFERED PLENTY !
WHY ?!
THAT QUESTION MEANS NOTHING HERE!
THY NEXT FATE AWAITS THEE.
CAN I ...


CAN I AT LEAST SEE HIROMI JUST ONE MORE TIME ?
THOU SHALT SEE HER AGAIN SOON. IN EVERY ERA, IN EVERY WORLD, SHE SHALL AWAIT THEE.


NATURE...
DIVIDES US INTO MALE AND FEMALE ...
WE COME TOGETHER AND CREATE OFFSPRING FOR POSTERITY ...


THE EMBRYO:
THE MARK OF SINCERE LOVE!

BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN, MALE AND FEMALE. WITHOUT THAT LOVE, THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE WOULD HAVE ENDED LONG AGO.

AS LONG AS
THE WORLD EXISTS,
MEN, WOMEN,
AND THE CHILDREN
THEY BEAR
WILL REPEAT
THIS ENDLESS DRAMA,
DAY AFTER DAY...

THE END

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BETTER TO HAVE LOVED AND LOST...

The gods, with their poetic justice, can be unrelenting. Just ask the young cynic Shogo, who sinned against love. Electroshock therapy was only meant to bring him face to face with his own violent misdeeds, but instead landed him in the court of a stern goddess.

If the encounter was a hallucination, then it's a hallucination that starts to encroach on reality in this unforgettable tale penned by manga-god Osamu Tezuka and inspired by Greek myths of divine unforgiving. Sharing with his longer work *Phoenix* the themes of recurrence and retribution as well as a spirit of high invention, *Apollo's Song* explores the meaning of love and the consequences of its absence.

GRAPHIC NOVEL

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Osamu Tezuka (1928-89) is the godfather of Japanese manga comics. He originally intended to become a doctor and earned his degree before turning to what was still then considered a frivolous medium. His many early masterpieces include the series known in the U.S. as *Astro Boy*. With his sweeping vision, deftly intertwined plots, and indefatigable commitment to human dignity, Tezuka elevated manga to an art form. Other works available from Vertical include the medical thriller *Ode to Kirihito* and the eight-volume epic *Buddha*, winner of the Eisner and Harvey Awards.

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